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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImageFX

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Welcome... to self-improvement



Are you a selfie addict? I'm sure that lots of you regularly take photos of yourselves, having fun with friends or family, or at a special occasion. It's a great way to capture the moment so that you won't forget the event (although, to those of you who use selfie sticks: God gave you arms, they're the perfect extendable

accessory to help you take a photo at length... rant over!) But as an artist, have you ever taken this one step further and created your own self-portrait? You are your best muse – and freely available when you want, too! We get artists to discuss the merits and downfalls of such a pursuit over on page 20.

As for this manga edition, I'm particularly pleased with the talent in the workshop section this month. From pages 62 to 87, you'll find stunning imagery and brilliant ways to get painting art in the style of manga. I loved FeiGiap's retro environment workshop on page 82. I got transported to warmer climes and the different senses and smells that you encounter on overseas trips just by looking at his richly detailed image. Jade Mosch's illustrative image on page 64 is a beautiful piece of unique art, and she shares some practical knowledge about her digital pastelling techniques, too.

How can I have almost finished writing this without mentioning the unicorn on the cover?! I've finally got a unicorn on the cover! Woo! My work here is done. Well, until next month that is...

I hope you enjoy the issue. As ever, we always love to hear from you and see what you're painting, so get in touch!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
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Our special cover for
subscribers this issue.



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find out more!

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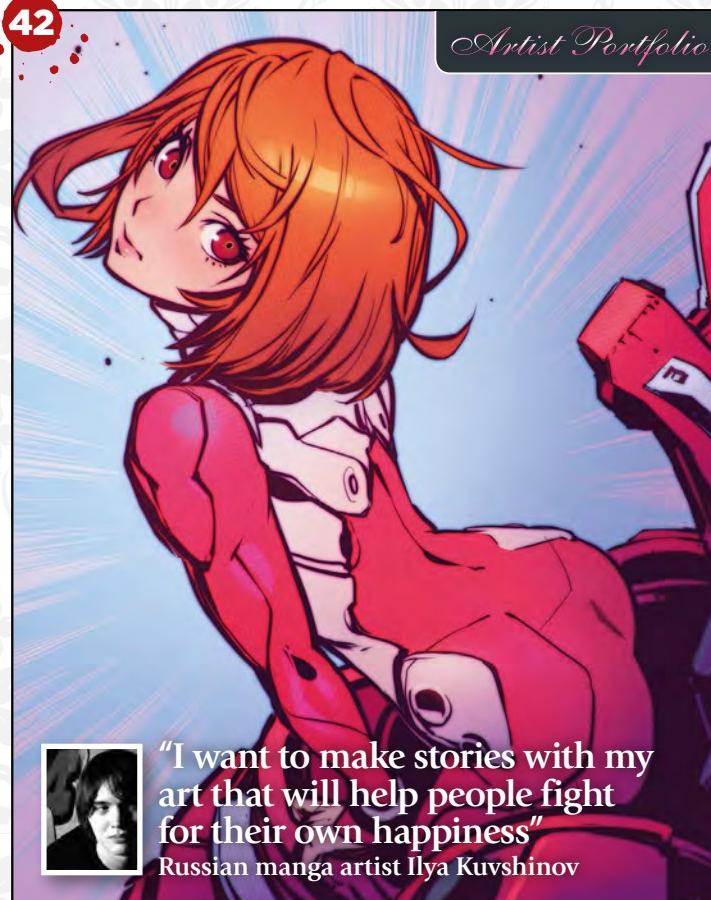
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Artist in residence

Reader
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THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art ➤

Workshops

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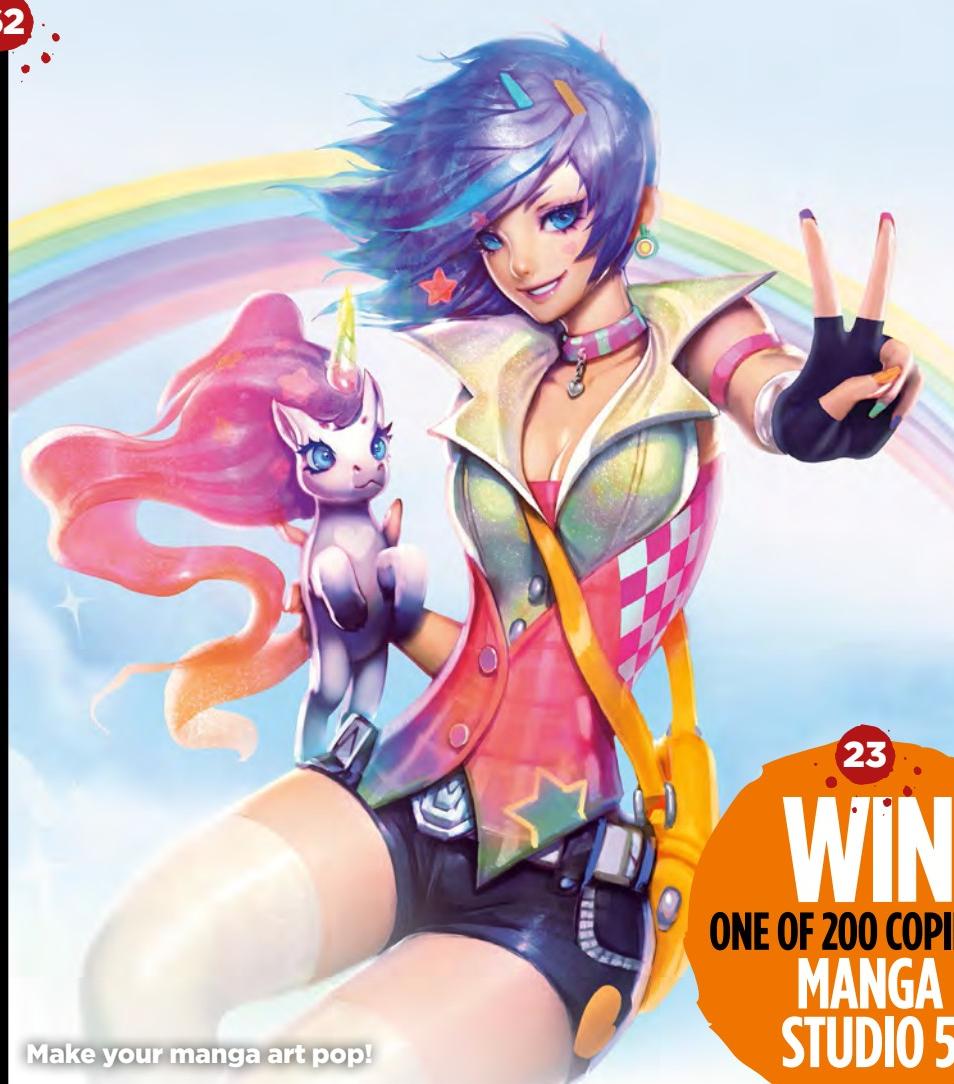
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MANGA STUDIO 5**

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1 NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Resources

Getting your hands on all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/manga121artist>

WORKSHOP VIDEO

A monster mash up

Cartoonist Brett Parson paints a beer-guzzling biker beast, using SketchBook Pro and Photoshop.



GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

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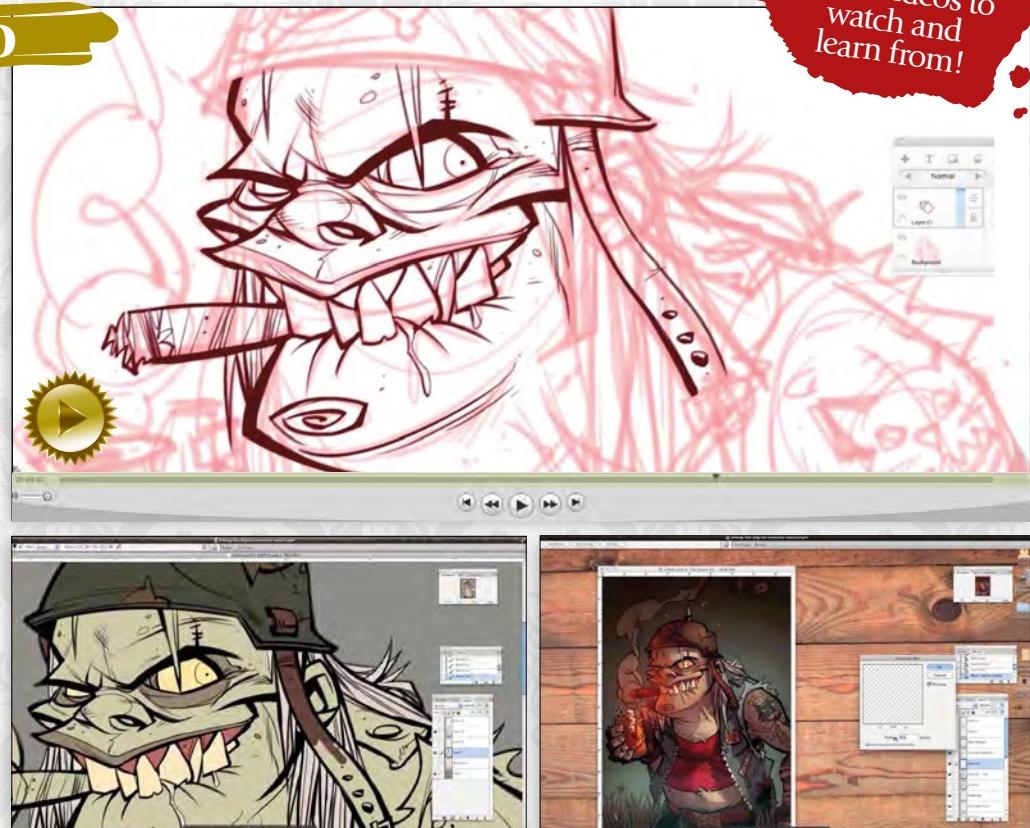
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
<http://ifxm.ag/manga121artist>

2 Find the files you want

Search through the list of resources to watch or download.

3 Download what you need

You can download all of the files at once, or individually.



1 NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE

FRIDAY 24 APRIL 2015

Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd +44 (0) 207 429 4000
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1 9PT

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POST ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA, UK

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK, EUROPE & REST OF THE WORLD

UK PHONE 0844 848 2852
OUTSIDE OF UK +44 (0) 1604 251045

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).
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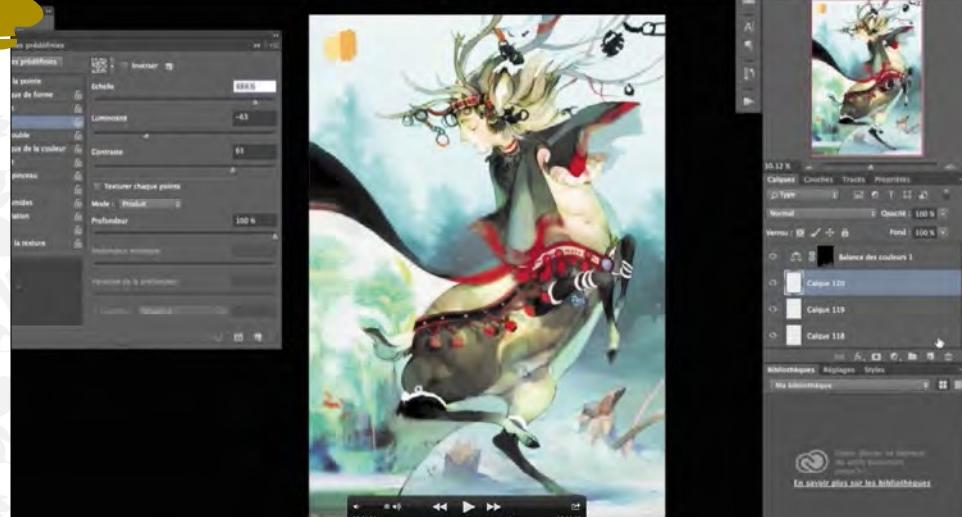
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Jade Mosch

Learn how to use traditional pastel skills to produce Asian-inspired illustrative art. Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



Low Zi Rong

Thinking of working up your own manga character concept into an illustration? The talented artist shares his step-by-step process for doing just that, in Clip Studio Print Pro. Plus WIPs and final image



FeiGiap

Take inspiration from around you to paint an atmospheric manga environment. Plus WIPs, brushes and final image



Tony Foti

Create a dynamic pose from a reference by moving elements with confidence. Plus WIPs and final image



Tony Foti

Why experience beats research when it comes to learning skills, such as design. Plus WIPs and final image



Maarten Verhoeven

The digital sculptor shares the techniques he uses for working on big-budget film effects, in Sculpting a Dragon with ZBrush.

PLUS WIPs and finished art available to download, created by accomplished professional artists from around the world, including Paul Kwon, Valentina Remenar, Bram Sels, Mark Molnar, Dave Brasgalla, John Petersen, Andy Brase, Brett Parson and more.

16 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

5-B BEER CAN

Brett Parson's Sketchbook Pro brush for creating dirty, traditional ink lines.



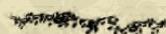
PERSONALISED FINGER BRUSH

Jade Mosch uses this for smooth painting with blurred edges.



LEAF BRUSH 2

FeiGiap's secret weapon for painting more realistic leaves and bushes.



Reader EXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Tatiana Kirgetova

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Tatiana finds inspiration everywhere, from music and nature to books and culture. Having painted ever since she can remember, she's been working in digital forms for the past six years and works freelance in the games industry.

"I like to let people discover what they want from my art," Tatiana says, who's always looking to improve her skills. She thinks about the characters she illustrates, giving them a personality that's emoted through her art. "One artist I know said 'I'm not an artist, I'm a dreamer' and that's how I feel, too."

1 NIGHTINGALE "This was inspired by Oscar Wilde's The Nightingale and the Rose. It's a story about a bird who sacrifices her own life for a young man, so he can have the red rose he's searching for. I listened to Hesse's Siddhartha while creating this piece, which resulted in the Indian feel."

2 CHRISTINA "Here's a naïve young knight who's just received her first personal sword. This is my favourite piece at the moment because everything turned out just as I wanted. Usually I'm not satisfied with the result!"



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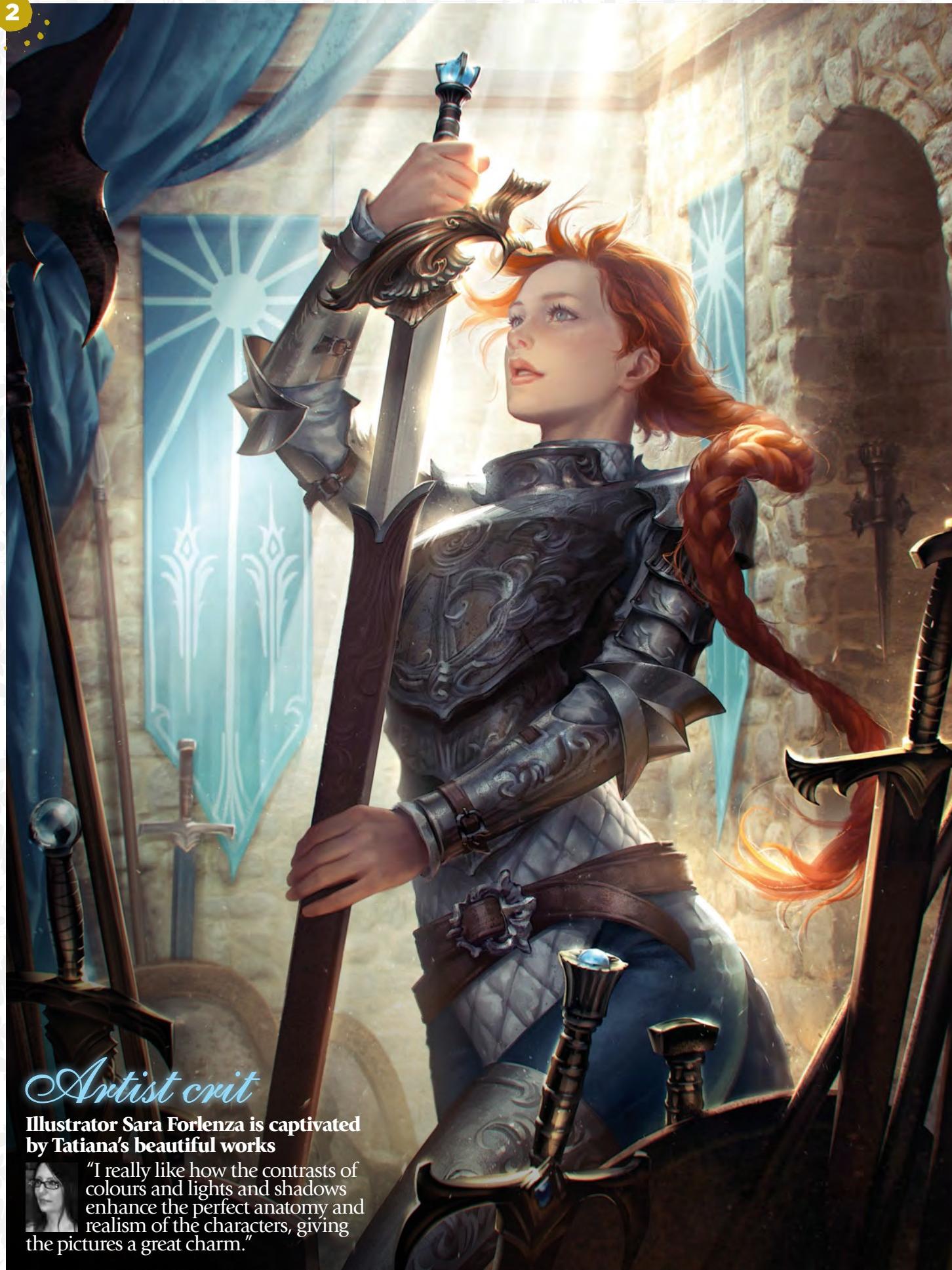


8 NOVEMBER 2015

May 2015

Email your submissions to fxpose@imaginefx.com

2



Artist crit

Illustrator Sara Forlenza is captivated by Tatiana's beautiful works

 "I really like how the contrasts of colours and lights and shadows enhance the perfect anatomy and realism of the characters, giving the pictures a great charm."

© Apollot

Dio Mahesa

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Inspired by World of Warcraft's fantasy figures, Dio's passion is for rasterised cartoon-style illustrations. "I love how vibrant Blizzard's colours are and its dynamic character designs," he says.

Dio's had no formal art training; instead, he taught himself how to draw and paint using free online videos and magazines. Toge Productions, an independent game developer based in Tangerang, Indonesia, employs him as a pixel artist. Dio says he loves taking on challenging projects, entering contests and honing his skills while gaining experience, and his ambition is to work for a game developer – such as his beloved Blizzard.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"What strikes you in Dio's paintings is a certain luminous quality in the lighting. These worlds are filled with shadowy forms and dark shapes, but pierced by light sources such as glowing vapour or coruscating energy."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor

1 DRAGON BORN "I did this to master vibrant colours with multiple light sources. It was a project initiated out of boredom and frustration with pixel art! It's influenced by concept designs for a game I worked on at Toge."

2 MALTHAEL THE SOUL REAPER "My entry for deviantART and Blizzard's Diablo III: The Reaper of Souls fan art contest. I put a lot of effort into this one and am extremely happy with the result. It didn't win, but I gained a lot of new skills from all the hard work I put in."

3 ULTIMATE SPELL "This was my first book cover commissioned artwork, for a role-playing game rulebook. It was very exciting. They challenged me to create two characters in a composition – completely out of my comfort zone, but I love a challenge."

4 ADVANCED SPELL "This was my second commission for the same publisher. This time they challenged me to create a setting for the characters, something I didn't always do in my art. Fight scenes and worm's-eye shots are some of my favourite things to draw."

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4



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Jeremiah Boon Zhenghao

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Paint Tool SAI



Jeremiah works as a junior artist at Koei Tecmo Singapore and is a member of Collateral Damage Studios, which started out as a doujin group that attended anime events in Singapore. His art is heavily influenced by the Japanese manga style, and he's been sketching manga characters ever since he was young.

"Instead of heavy line work, I prefer to take a light, painting approach to many of my works," says Jeremiah. "I'm inspired by George Kamitani and am still trying to capture the feel of his works in my own." He tells us that he loves to experiment with futuristic androids and attractive female characters in his art.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Jeremiah creates an impressive range of moods with his female characters, from the daunting robot girl police officer to the deceptively sweet vampire girl surrounding herself with reminders of her lost humanity."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 FROSTHEART "This was inspired by countless hours spent playing Dark Souls. Remember to enchant your weapon with fire! I've always been amazed by how setting the scale in your picture will change the feeling of an illustration, so in this one I worked with the size of two characters to give the beast greater impact."

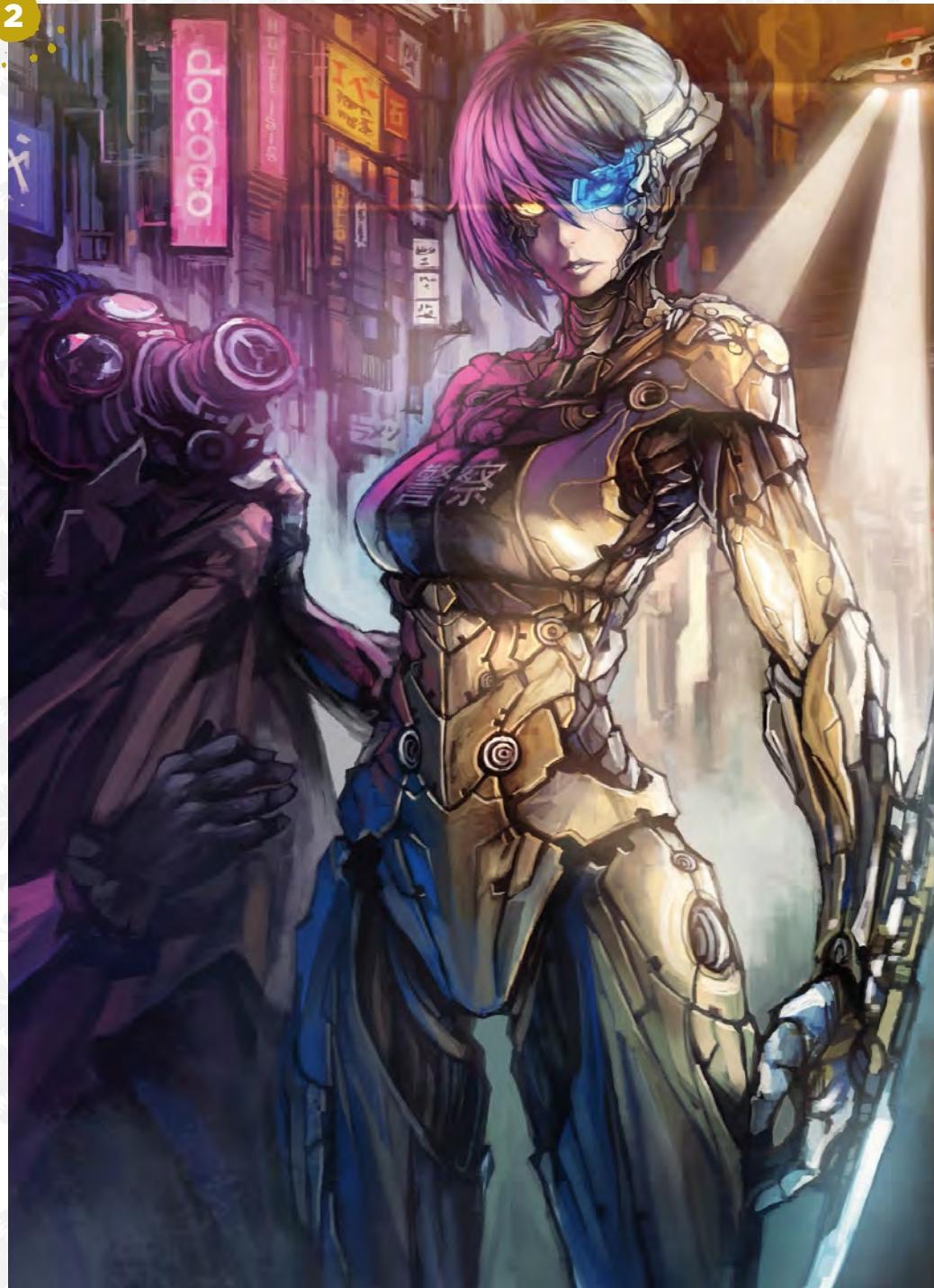
2 TOKYO POLICE 2037 "How crime fighting will be in 22 years from now... or how I would like it to be. An android girl with a human face but a robotic body is hauntingly charming to me! The inspiration was drawn from Deus Ex: Human Revolution, with its dark, moody designs in a world where robotics are prevalent."

3 MEMORIES "This got into the Pixiv Girls collection, so because of that it's my favourite! She's a vampire painting her memories of the days when she was still human. I try to do illustrations jam-packed with story information that can be picked up in parts of the picture, enabling people to piece together the story from each visual detail they come across."

1



2



3



 Romana Kendelic

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MEDIA: Photoshop





Romana grew up on a steady diet of adventure novels and comic books. She says, "I'm attracted to images that have a strong sense of storytelling. I want to give the viewer a realistic glimpse into a fantastic world, a snapshot of the character in the particular situation, something they could see only if they were somehow transported into the story."

The artist is busy working as a freelancer, and hopes to one day create and illustrate her own narratives.

1 SHARING THE LOOT “This is my

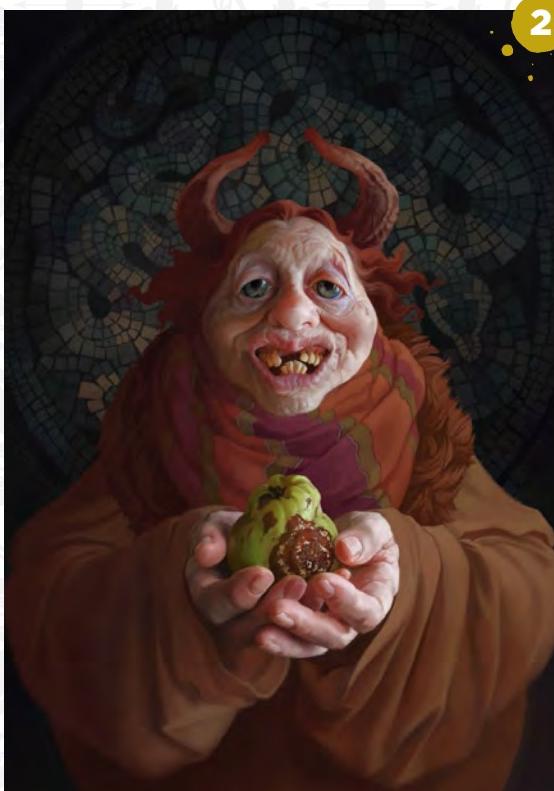
most detailed painting to date. Here I tried to really push the realistic depiction of the characters. I wanted to give them a real, palpable presence and throw the viewer straight into the action of the story."

OFFERING "This started as a

 random sketch. I like how it evokes mixed feelings. Viewers interpret the figure in different ways: cute, ugly, a little bit scary, benevolent and kind or evil and creepy. I suspect she might be all of those things."

3 THE BEGINNINGS "I painted this for a deviantART contest. I wanted

for a deviantART contest. I wanted to illustrate the idea of an artist at the beginning of the creative process - when the whole world is at her fingertips, the universe is clasped between her hands and it can transform into anything she imagines."



1



2



Aritra Dey

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Painter,
 After Effects



Aritra has five years' experience in creating visual effects and digital environments. "I'm fortunate enough to have worked on Sin City 2 and other Hollywood projects," he says.

The artist's main inspiration is matte painter Dylan Cole: "I really like his style, colour palette and detailing." Aritra also admires Raphael Lacoste, Dusso and David Luong. He enjoys creating moody environments with impressive, dramatically lit skies.

1 HAPPY NEW YEAR "This idea came into my head on New Year's Eve, hence the name. I got a spark of inspiration from the idea of starting a new year and a new beginning – I wanted to create something futuristic in the style of Dylan Cole."

2 EMOTION "This study of a photograph was completed in Painter. I was missing my sister at the time and this helped me to channel those feelings into art."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

 "Emma has a wonderful eye for female portraits and creating atmospheres of melancholic dreaminess. In this one I just love the implication the character is developing wings and about to take flight."

Alice Pattillo,
Staff Writer



2



3



4



Emma Rose Paterson

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Emma grew up painfully shy, she says, but found her happy space in drawing. She taught herself the basics, and then became serious about improving her skills when she discovered digital painting.

"I believe fantasy can teach us a lot about reality," says Emma. "I love characters because they enable us to step outside ourselves and become immersed in experiences totally different from our own."

The artist takes her inspiration from fashion, anthropology and the work of Justin Sweet. She says she always aims to create characters who look like they have a life outside the picture frame.

1 I DISINTEGRATE "We grew up in a cacophony of media input. We lived through screens, blindly broadcasting our 'selves' into an anonymous web. One day a girl fell in love with digital paint. It's the stuff of sci-fi!"

2 ROSE QUARTER "I tried to create a sense of non-violent confrontation – and the scent of incense. I've been experimenting with huge brushstrokes and suggested detail, balanced with small areas of tight rendering. I imagine sounds of the street floating in through the window and a harp playing nearby."

3 SKY ABOVE, VOICE WITHIN "I began this when I first heard the music from Skyrim. We had just moved into a tiny flat and painting this enabled me to escape to somewhere nicer. She's approaching a sacred part of the forest and I wanted to evoke the light of stained-glass windows in the canopy."

4 NUMB "This was for a competition to depict Lara Croft on her first adventure. I was interested in the emotional element of a young person thrown into an intense survival situation where she's forced to kill. Would she become numb to it after weeks of struggling to survive and escape?"

Wadim Kashin

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Wadim loved drawing from an early age, but never had any formal training. He taught himself digital art and carved out a freelance career working in sci-fi and fantasy.

"I take inspiration from John Berkey, Stephan Martinière and Russia's own legendary modern artist, Pavel Filonov," says Moscow-based Wadim.

The artist loves abstraction, which he says helps him to create post-apocalyptic artwork. He begins his art with the colour spectrum and atmosphere in mind, working entirely in digital. "My dream is that one day digital art will be evaluated in the same league as the world's masterpieces from traditional artists," he muses.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Dystopia and post-apocalypse vistas are commonly visited art themes, yet Wadim has brought a freshness and originality to them. I love how he has considered the weather, too (brrr), and cannily used it to his advantage."

Beren Neale,
Commissioning Editor

1 THE FIRST SNOW IS IN PORT

"This piece is particularly abstract and focused on texture. I'm strongly influenced by the weather and here have created a fantasy port full of ships that have fallen victim to destructive winds. I focused on colour and vibrancy, with a strong beam of sunlight and passionate hues to invoke the feeling of turbulence."

2 SILVER CLOUDS

"This piece was heavily influenced by the film Blade Runner. Ridley Scott's dystopian world has had a huge impact on me and my work. My thirst for sci-fi futuristic cities never seems to be quenched, no matter how much art I create!"

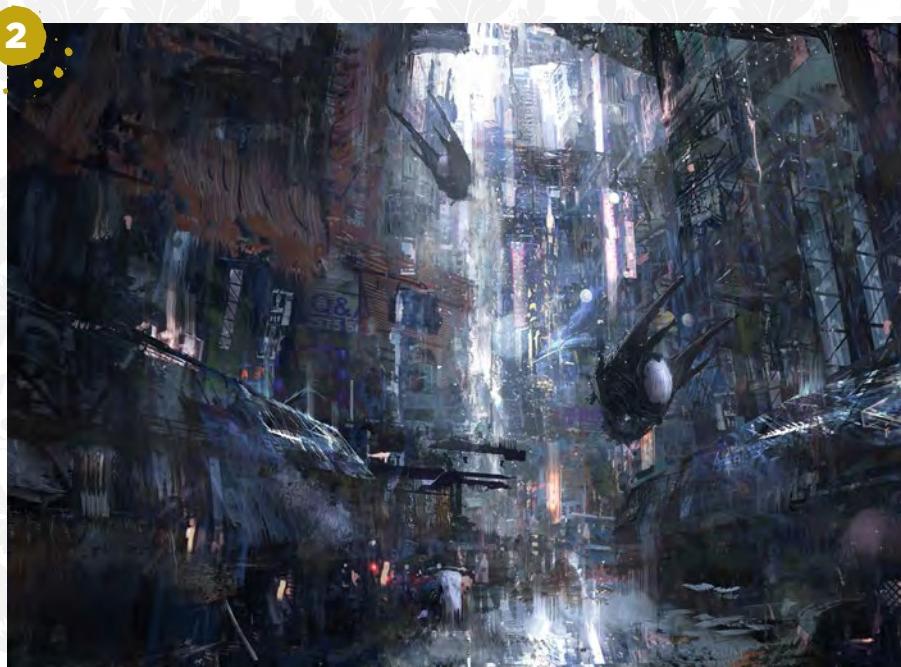
3 SEARCHING

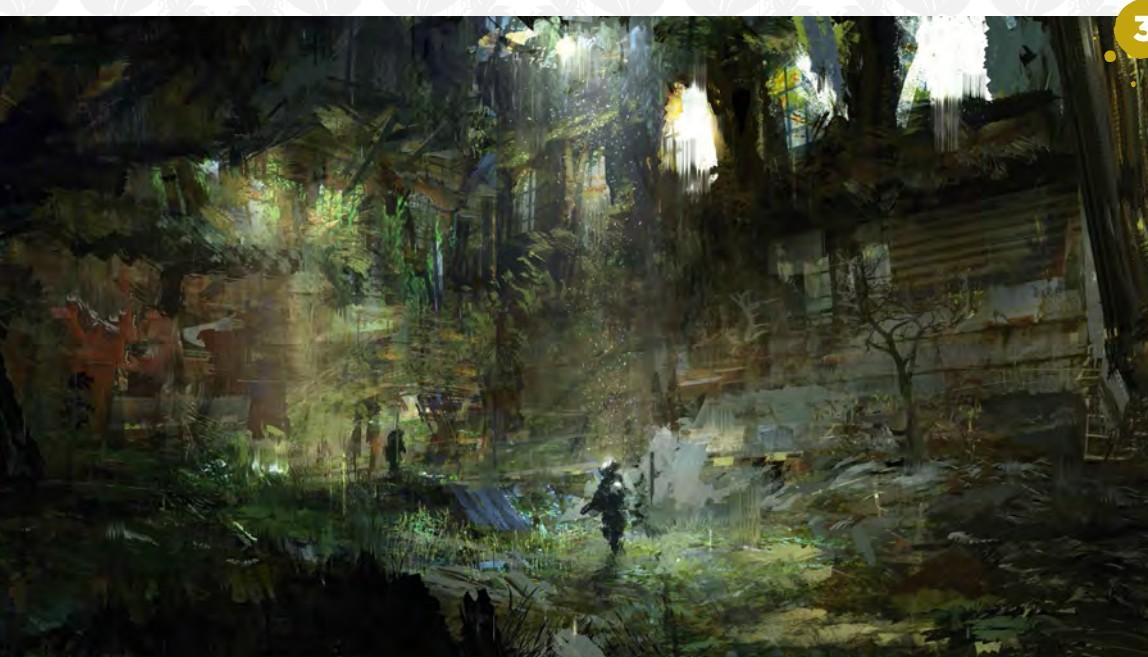
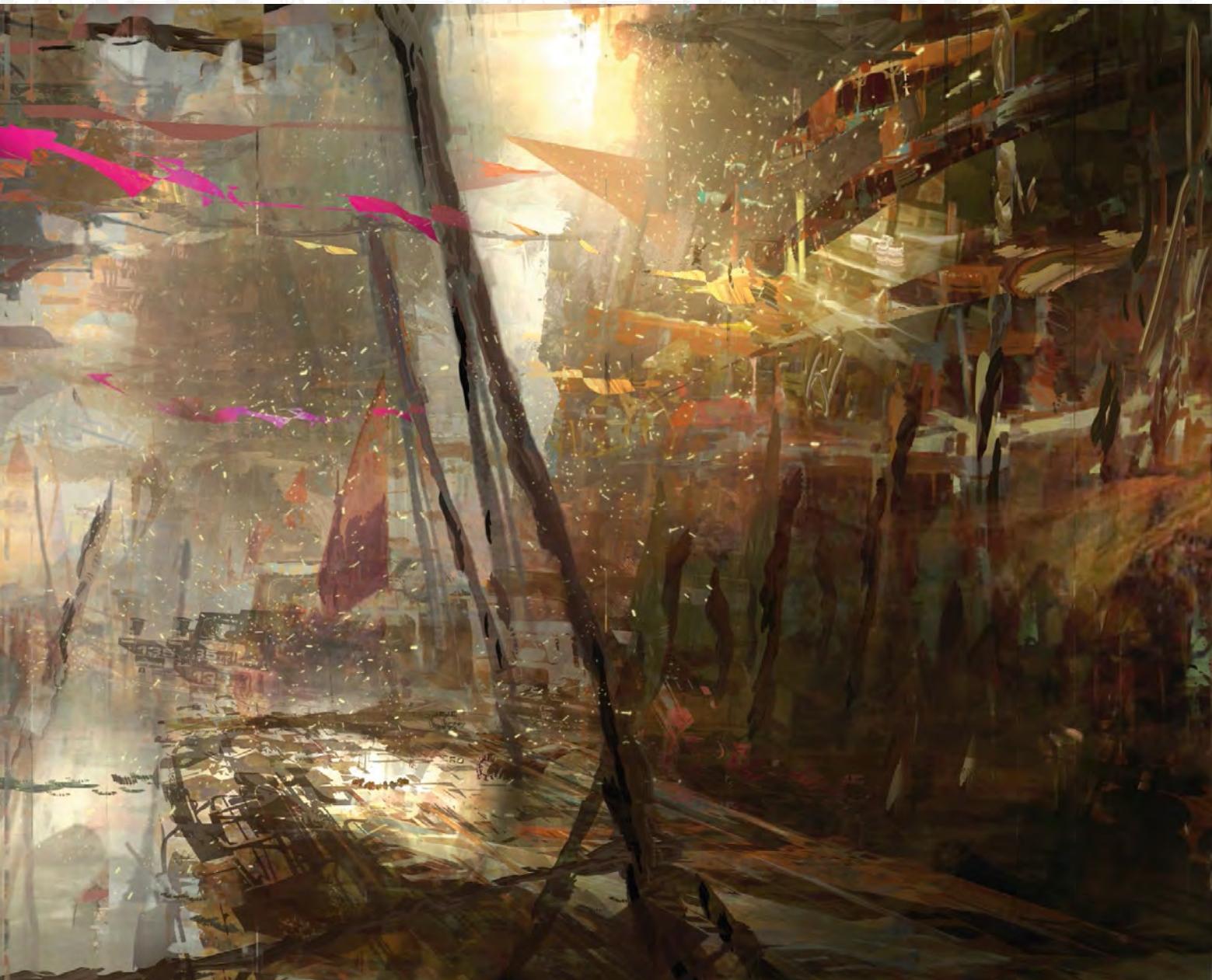
"I love post-apocalyptic narratives. I wanted to create a lost humanoid world, where nature has consumed most traces of humanity. There's an atmosphere of fear and the story of hunters and the hunted, and uncertainty of whether these characters are predators or prey."

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3

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE

OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

Jeff Wamester chooses comic art for his self-portraits because it demands confident line work – there's nowhere to hide. This image features on his business card.





SUMMER OF COMIC FUN

A meaner Judge Dredd and archive Dan Dare stories will make up just part of 2000 AD's celebratory summer. Pick up a copy, or risk a trip to the Iso-Cubes.

Page 25



A PICTURE OF HEALTH

Winona Nelson learnt the hard way that too much painting and not enough sleeping isn't good for the soul. She tells us how she redressed the balance.

Page 26



DESTINATION ZAGREB

With over 60 pro artists attending May's IFCC event in Croatia's capital, there's a good chance you'll bump into one of your art heroes on the city streets.

Page 29

Ego-centric Art

Self-involved Are artists' self-portraits the original selfies, and do they reflect the narcissism of the social media trend?

Selfies and self-portraits do have some things in common. The term selfie is a shortening of self-portrait and obviously, both are images of the self created by that same self.

It goes further than this, though. "Selfies obey the same rules as other portraits, in that they more often show more of the subject's left side rather than right side, in keeping with the historical preference in portrait painting," says

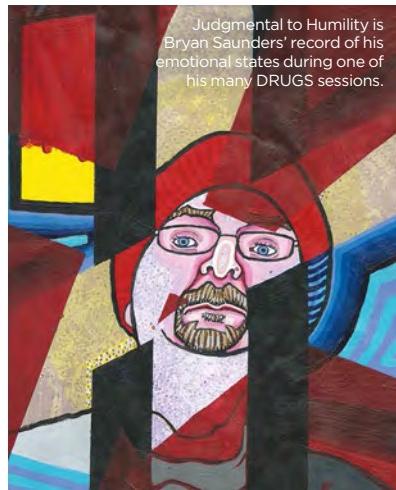


experimental psychologist **George Mather**. The tendency to show more of the subject's left cheek is thought to be due to this side producing more intense expressions of emotion, and therefore revealing more of one's identity.

But the psychological functions of the selfie and self-portrait are very different,



argues **Dr Maria Walsh**, theory leader at Chelsea College of Art & Design. She says that while the selfie "seems to be about an exchange of



A PICTURE OF HEALTH

Winona Nelson learnt the hard way that too much painting and not enough sleeping isn't good for the soul. She tells us how she redressed the balance.

Page 26

exhibitionist 'here I am's,' the self-portrait helps the artist to probe and examine their own personality. "It's a way to understand the fragility and resilience of the human condition, but also to question received ideas about identity," says Dr Walsh.

PERSONAL PERCEPTION

George agrees with this analysis. "Portraits aim to reveal and document their subject in terms of appearance, temperament, mood and status," he says. "Artists have used self-portraits at least partly as a form of self-analysis, to penetrate and reveal their own character." In other words, having complete self-awareness is essential to great art.

Take the legendary Frank Frazetta's self-portrait, an oil-painting created in 1962.

“Artists have used self-portraits at least partly as a form of self-analysis, to reveal their own character”



Sara Frazetta, the artist's granddaughter and one of the founding members of the Frazetta Girls who promote his work today, explains why

Frank created it.

"At this time in his life he was being turned away from jobs and heard critics saying, 'Frazetta is washed up,'" she reveals. "He used that time of his life to create his self-portrait and prove the naysayers wrong. The brush strokes vividly show the array of emotions, while his eyes are piercing, intense and signify his perseverance to reveal his raw talent. This piece was personal."

This wasn't the only time Frank used his own image in his work, Sara adds. "I feel ➤



Bryan Talbot's self-portrait simply advertises a DVD documentary about his work.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

JEFF WAMESTER

How self-sketching has helped advance his art

Why create self-portraits?

It's the best reference – it's always available! It's also good practice: portraits are about nailing those proportions. You find yourself battling your own perception of self versus how others see you and having to find that true representation. It makes you face those perceptions. Over the years it's been a great catalogue of improvement as well as the progression of perception of self.

Why illustrate yourself in comic-book form?

It's one of my favourite art styles, but it also presents a unique challenge. You don't get the luxury of tone or subtlety – the lines have to be confident and definitive.

Do you focus on perceived flaws or idealise yourself?

I don't try to improve or idealise, but I do try to capture the positive side of myself. I don't think presenting the dark side to avoid idealisation is the best approach. I think your feelings about yourself are revealed in your results. Positive will usually yield a positive light, negative self-image will usually yield some negative aspects in the self-portrait. Someone who represents themselves in a negative light are just presentations of an ego that obfuscates who they really are. They're struggling with self-acceptance.

Do you use a photo or the mirror to create your portraits?

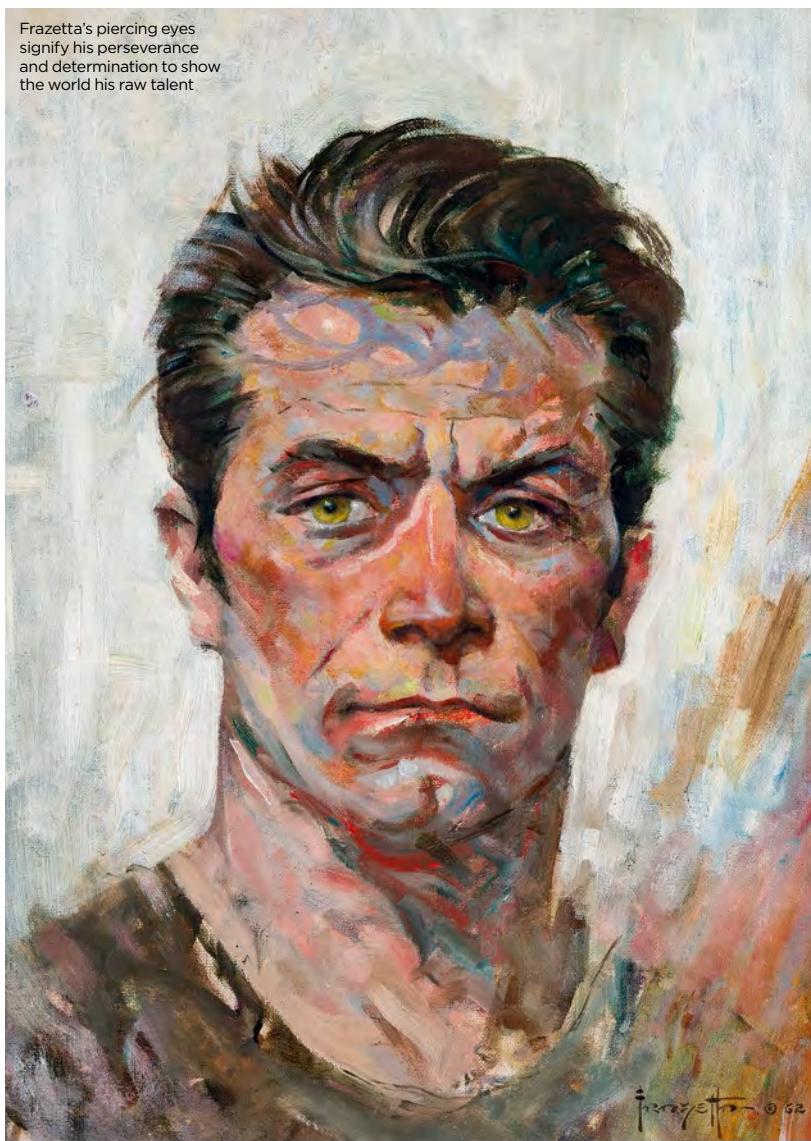
Both! Photo for consistency of angle, and mirror to understand what I'm seeing by being able to look at my face from different angles. I even recently tried a self-portrait from memory only.



Jeff is a storyboard artist, character designer and comic book illustrator who's worked for DC and Dark Horse comics.
<http://about.me/jeffwamester>



Frazetta's piercing eyes signify his perseverance and determination to show the world his raw talent



► that most of my grandfather's men in his paintings were inspired by his own physique," although she concedes that "some muscularity was embellished a bit". She continues: "I mean, whose body do we know better than our own? He could photograph himself and use his own body as a reference."

Sara believes there's more to a self-portrait than mere narcissism, and not just in her grandfather's case. "Every artist has a different reason for painting a self-portrait. It could be mere self-expression to being an introvert who'd rather use themselves as a reference, rather than a stranger."

SELF-EXTREME

If self-portraits are about self-examination, some artists take it further than others. At one end of the spectrum is Bryan Saunders,

best known for his self-portrait series DRUGS, which he created while intoxicated.

Bryan has made it his 20-year long mission to create a new individual self-portrait every day – recording both pleasure and pain. His aim is

to enrich his life experiences and expand his perception, elevating his life, art, creativity and consciousness.

In true artist style, Bryan makes himself the spectacle, "The way that I do self-portraits, spontaneously during physical and mental experiences, it's as if I'm both the scientist and the lab rat," he reveals. His

“I’m not drawing myself but a character, a stylised image representing me”

doodles during extreme emotional states, physical turmoil and while inebriated on drugs all could be seen as masochistic, and each experiment is documented through his website (www.bryanlewissaunders.org).

But, they are self-analytical. His portraits play out like a diary, taking the idea of self-reflection to the extreme. "Individually, I think of my self-portraits like cells; some die quickly while others regenerate and bond together, forming this new type of sensory organ that I have and it's this organ that enables me to perceive myself from an



Bryan Saunders painted Soma after taking the muscle relaxant Carisoprodol.

entirely new and external point of view," he says. "Quite often I use the self-portraits to turn unwanted feelings into ones that are more desirable or manageable."

CHARACTER-DRIVEN

At the other end of the spectrum, veteran comic book artist Bryan Talbot, doesn't feel



there's anything emotionally poignant about his self-portraits – although psychologists may argue this happens nonetheless on a subliminal level. Either way, Bryan has painted himself numerous times throughout his 40-year long career, and says he sees himself as just another character.

His introduction to self-portraits wasn't a personal, reflective project at all. The first strip he did with himself as a character (the narrator) was for Heartbreak Hotel magazine, where each month an artist was asked to do a strip about themselves.

"It's not particularly realistic," Bryan explains, "It's usually easier than drawing other characters. I only illustrate myself when there needs to be a narrator and I think it would be fitting if it was myself who's talking directly to the reader."

In the world of sequential art, the narrative behind the images isn't about the artists' identity and self-discovery, and neither is it about narcissism. "I already know how daft I look," Bryan says. "I'm not actually drawing myself but a character, a stylised image if you like, representing me."



Bryan Saunders incorporated his own blood into this illustration, entitled Bit My Tongue Last Night.

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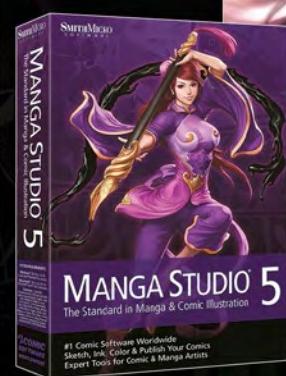
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ImagineFX regular Stanley Lau's art features on the cover of Manga Studio 5.



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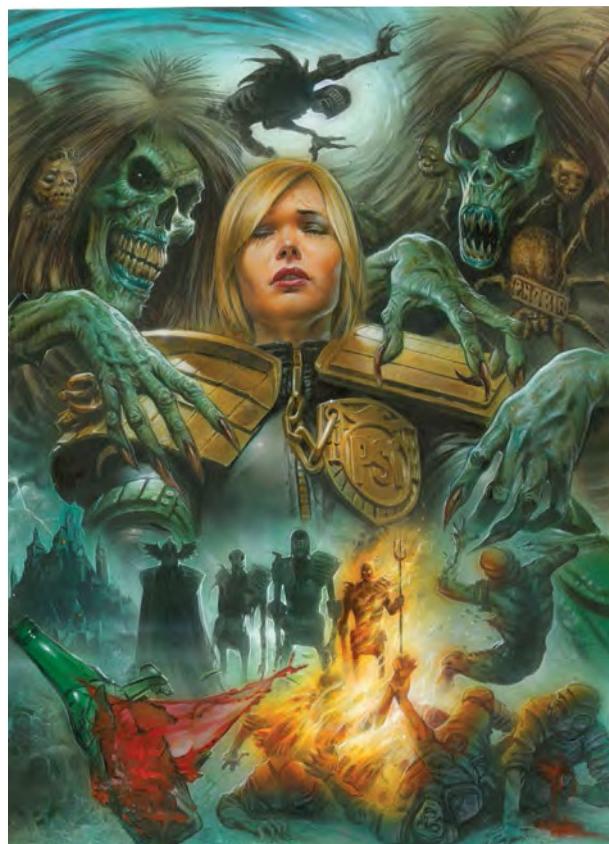
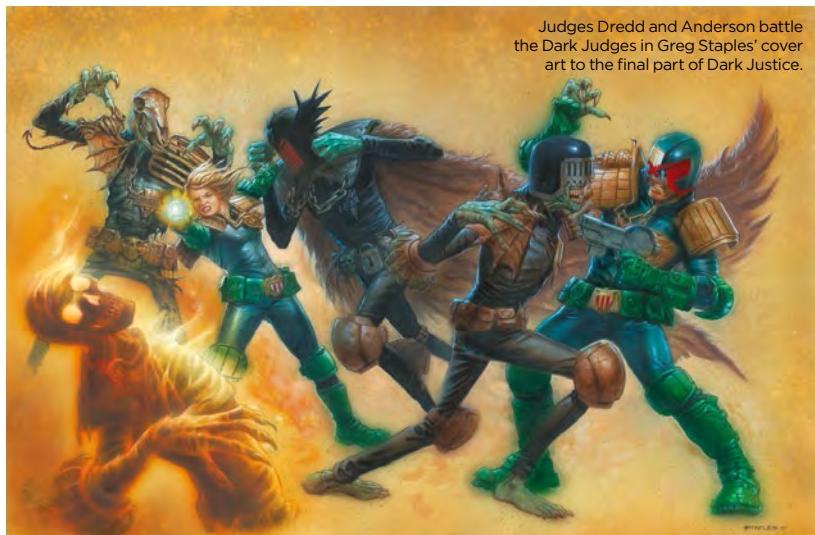


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Gaze into the fist of Dredd

Cinematic art Mega-City One's infamous judge dishes out an illustrative haymaker, courtesy of Greg Staples

This July sees the hardback release of Judge Dredd: Dark Justice, one of the most hotly anticipated 2000 AD series ever. This compilation of the 11-part weekly series was two years in the making, and sees John Wagner back on writing duties, with illustrations by Greg Staples.

"The whole idea behind it was to make a comic that's more like a film. It had to have an epic feel to it, like a big Hollywood blockbuster," explains Greg. The artist came up with a top-secret technique in order to realise the project.



"People are surprised when they look at the art – they always try to figure out how it was done. That's why it's nice to keep a little bit of the mystery behind it," says Greg. "My favourite artists wouldn't give away their craft, and that got my imagination firing!"

Greg worked with traditional mediums exclusively to create the panels, taking twice as long as if he had painted the artwork digitally. He used photo references for the first time in his career to bring a cinematic realism to the Dredd universe; "I've worked on films as well. I've been on movie sets and studied lighting, so I brought all that into it.

Dark Justice received rave reviews when it was first released weekly in 2014.

A grasp of cinematic lighting enabled Greg to give Dark Justice the comic equivalent of the big-screen treatment.

"Originally, Dark Justice was going to be either four or five episodes, and then John suggested making it a book, so it was almost always intended to be a book" recounts Greg. "It's difficult for a story to maintain that sense of suspense when you read it week by week. I think with a book, you're able to just sit down in the same way you would watch a film, where it holds you. It will work much better collected, and I'm very much looking forward to it coming out the way it was intended."

For more details on Dark Justice, visit www.2000adonline.com.



Judge Fire terrorises the inhabitants of Mega-City One, in these panels taken from Dark Justice.

All artwork © Rebellion Publishing



My work areas are scattered throughout my house.

I paint in my living room, where I can play a movie in the background. Since I paint standing up, it's nice to have the couch behind me where I can take a break, and I have space to back up far from the painting to get a better look at it.

I keep lots of art and reference books and comics nearby for inspiration, and I have a drawing desk in the corner. I like to draw flat

My scanner scans up to 12x18 inches. It's too big to put near my computer, but it works wirelessly so I can put it here, where there's room.

My cameo plotter hooks up to my computer via USB to cut vector images out of vinyl, fabric or paper. I use it to make fancy labels on my project-specific sketchbooks.

Art and reference books and comics for inspiration. My current favourite art books include Jeffrey Jones: A Life in Art, The Art of Brom and William Trost Richards: True to Nature.



This is an ergonomic standing mat, so my feet don't get too sore from standing while I paint.

Winona Nelson

Painting for life Healthy habits punctuate the day inside the illustrator and concept artist's Philadelphia-based studio



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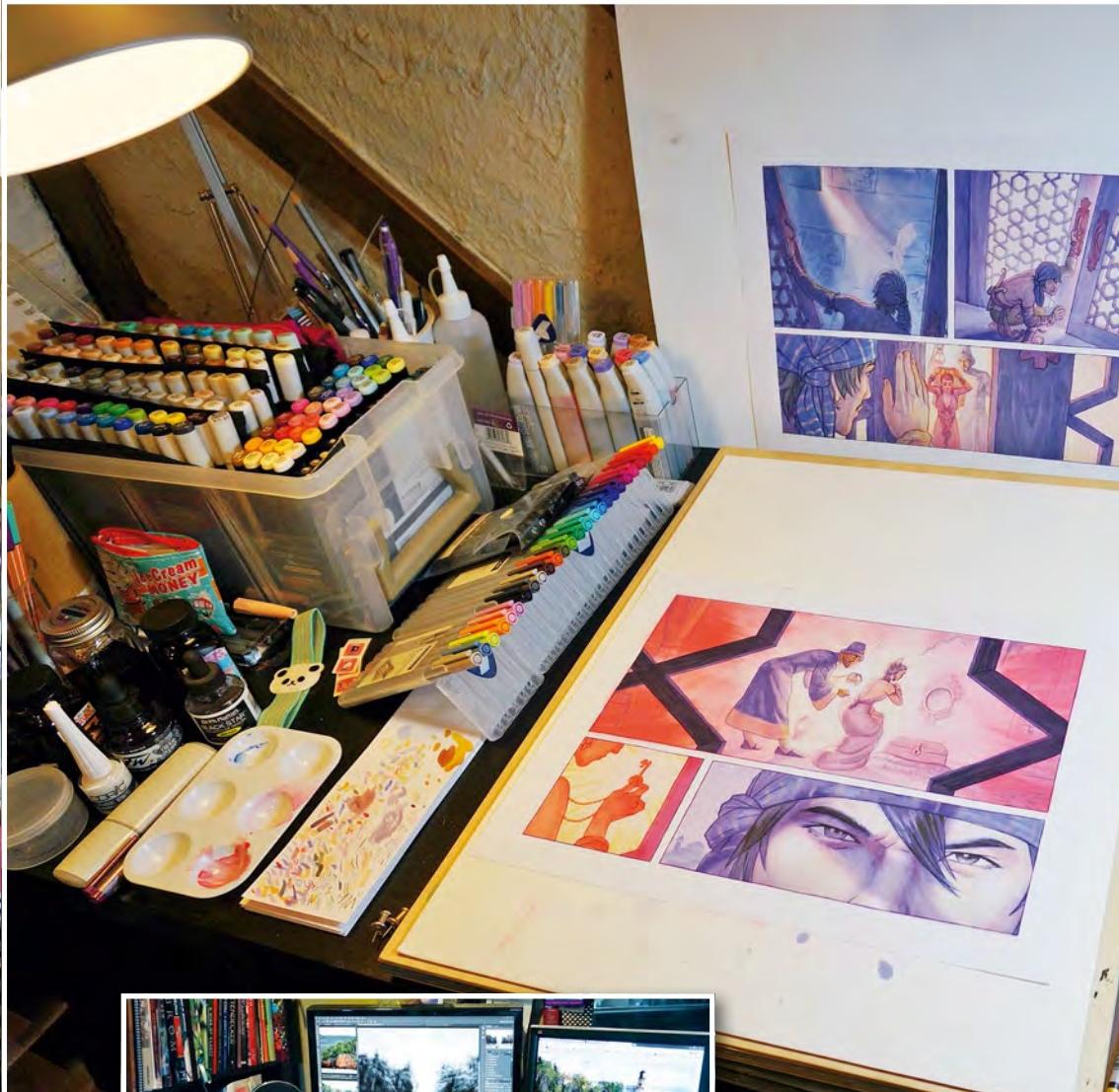
rather than at an angled drafting table because it's easier on my wrist. My computer work area is upstairs in the studio I share with my boyfriend (fellow artist Anthony Palumbo). My workflow goes back and forth from traditional to digital to traditional sometimes, depending on the project and how much time I have. I have Bluetooth speakers for streaming music appropriate to my current project, to keep me in the mood.

In a typical day, I wake up between 8 and 9am, put a few strokes on the painting I'm

working on, and then make coffee and a smoothie for breakfast. Putting even the smallest bit of work in before breakfast keeps my work on my mind and makes me much more productive all day.

I used to sleep late and then stay up very late working, but it was making me unproductive and causing repetitive stress injury to my wrist. I've changed a lot of my habits to become healthier, such as getting around nine hours of sleep, eating healthy food, exercising, and taking regular breaks

Artist news, software & events



This is my drawing desk. I used to just have a board and sit at my computer desk, but I started to get really into Copic markers and built this area to make room for all my marker supplies.



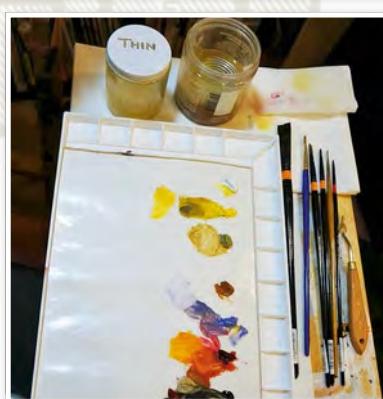
At my drawing desk, I use a drummer's stool. It helps me sit upright so I don't get a sore back.



At my computer desk, I have more favourite art books, a mirror for easy hand or face reference, and space to set up and do small paintings.

to stretch. I use a break timer and take a break every 45 minutes, during which I do little household chores like washing the dishes. This helps keep me from getting repetitive stress injuries, and by the time I stop work for the day I can relax, read and play games.

Winona is an illustrator and concept artist. Her clients have included Wizards of the Coast, Kabam, Planet Moon Studios, Flagship Studios and Warhammer Black Library. See her art at <http://winonanelson.blogspot.co.uk>.



My taboret usually looks like this. The two jars contain turpenoid, my favourite painting medium. It's a mixture of one-part stand oil, one-part Damar varnish and three-parts turpenoid.



When I'm working on smaller pieces, I tape them to pieces of foamcore to raise them to a better height. I use a long mahl stick I made from a broomstick with taped-up socks on the ends (don't worry, I washed them). I use my phone to find reference images, and tape it to the foamcore as well so I don't knock it down.

If you missed it first time around, get your hands on our sci-fi special edition!

The cover of the magazine features a central illustration of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a futuristic aviator helmet with goggles and a leather jacket with fur-trimmed cuffs. She is holding two metallic, multi-barreled weapons. The background is a cloudy sky. At the top, there are categories: Characters | Robots | Environments | Vehicles | Creatures. A 'FREE DISC' logo is in the top right. A circular badge on the left says '228 PAGES OF ESSENTIAL ART TIPS'. Another badge on the bottom left says 'FREE DISC INSIDE Including resources + 27 Workshop starter files'. On the right, it says 'ON SALE IN TESCO, WHSMITH, BARNES & NOBLE AND MORE!' and 'Improve your Digital Art Skills with expert workshops from the world's best professional artists'. The bottom right includes publisher information: 'A Creative masterclass from the makers of ImagineFX', 'Printed in the UK £14.99 ISBN 978178389191-7 Future 9 781783 891917>'.

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Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Two paintings by England-based artist Derek Zabrocki, who'll be appearing at May's IFCC in Croatia.

Get creative in Croatia

From art to Zagreb IFCC brings together 60 international experts to share knowledge on illustration, concept art and much more



"There isn't another similar event anywhere near," says Marko Prpic Zets, director of the Independent Festival of Creative Communication (IFCC), in Croatia. "Our region features many amazing artists and designers. Combine them with well-known international folks and you get a creative explosion called IFCC."

The Zagreb-based event is the result of Croatia's Boonar Studio project and the

Boonika art network (www.boonika.net) working together, with Marko at the helm. IFCC focuses on art and design, particularly within the entertainment, publishing and advertising industries.

Confirmed speakers for 2015 include Mike Hill, Jan Urschel and Derek Zabrocki – some of the 60-plus experts who'll be on hand to share their knowledge. "I think our old slogan – 'We support art... no bullshit!' – says it all," Marko explains. "IFCC is a big project which will, hopefully, give us an opportunity

do something significant for artists and designers in the industry."

There's a big focus on commercial illustrations, animations and concept art. "The truth is that 'art in the industry' is one of most important forms of contemporary art," says Marko. "At least, that's how we see it."

IFCC takes place between 25 and 30 May. See www.ifcc-croatia.com for details. ImagineFX readers can receive a 20 per cent discount off tickets by entering future#ifcc at <http://ifcc-croatia.com/get-tickets>.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, **Claire Howlett**, on craig@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK



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Free ebook

A thousand thanks for the free fantasy art book. You guys are doing an awesomely awesome job. This book will help me learn a lot about fantasy and concept art. Keep up the great work. God bless you!

Faisal Khan, via email



Readers can still get a free copy of our Fantasy Art ebook, worth £10.49. Turn to page 48!

Claire replies Thank you Faisal! For those of you thinking 'Hang on, there was a FREE Fantasy Art book? How do I get this?' We gave away a free ebook worth £10.49 with our book illustration issue last month (number 120). For details on how you can get hold of a copy, turn to page 48.

Sisters act

I read Charlotte's letter about perceived gender inequality in both your magazine and the art industry, in issue 120, with great interest. As a female artist myself, I would agree we often seem to be under-represented. Though I don't think ImagineFX is guilty here. I've enjoyed ogling captivating art by the outrageous Lora Zombie, the brilliant Charlie Bowater and Rovina Cai in recent issues.

Could there be more female artists in ImagineFX and elsewhere? Of course. But we could do more for ourselves, perhaps actively seeking promotion, instead of passively relying on others to do it for us.

I read recently that men are much more likely than women to apply for jobs they don't have the experience for. At risk of generalising, men do seem to have more natural confidence, a willingness to put themselves forward.

Firstly, female artists need to make outstanding art, so good it simply cannot be ignored. But we also need the courage to put our art forward, to promote ourselves, be as good as men at it. If we're doing those two things, there can be no excuses from the media and other platforms.

Anonymous, via email



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 120?

Turn to page 48 for details on this edition and other special offers, too.



Charlie Bowater's sketches, from issue 118, have found another fan, in one letter writer this issue.

Claire replies It's always interesting and valuable to gain insight from within the industry, so thank you for sharing your views. What do other readers think about this – male and female? Could female artists promote themselves better? Has anyone ever felt discriminated against in the fantasy and sci-fi art industries because of their gender? Do readers want to read more about how to promote themselves as artists?

Running into ideas

Thanks so much for your regularly inspiring magazine. I buy every issue. Most artists suffer from creative block from time to time and I want to share my new catalyst for breaking through it: running.

I initially started, aiming to lose weight that had built up after too long stuck at my desk, eating bad food. I thought I would hate it, but after the first two short runs (which admittedly were a bit, er, panty), much to my surprise, I've found I love it.

As well as the obvious physical benefits, and those lovely endorphins (a natural high), there's something about swapping screens and nagging emails for peaceful trees and buxom hills that makes me very happy. It's now part of my daily routine.

I've become more productive and I seem to come back to my desk full of fresh ideas. The exercise clears my mind of unimportant white noise is supplanted by creative thoughts and visions. There's definitely a correlation between physical exercise and increased brain activity. The Romantic-era poets of course went for long walks to stimulate their imaginations.

I feel like I'm creating some of my best art at the moment, because of this. If any other artists are struggling for ideas or motivation, I'd certainly recommend a gentle jog, ideally in the countryside. Works for me!

Ben Haverstock, via email

Claire replies Interesting stuff, thanks Ben. Have others found exercise helpful for creativity? What other methods do artists use to trigger creative thoughts?



Your art news that's grabbed our attention

Alexander Johanson
@AJohanson89

"One of my best pieces yet. @imaginefx has helped me in the two years of painting."



John Mueller
@johnmuellerart

"@imaginefx check out the digital overhaul of my classic 90s graphic novel OINK"



Efraín Romero
@efrainarte

"Here's my crazy concept of the illustration I'm working on"



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Thanks to a combination of Apple's innate ability to make the latest technology accessible and the unrivalled personalisation that wearable technology provides, the Apple Watch is at the top of many people's wish lists.

With an Apple Watch, notifications appear on your wrist, included apps

track your physical activity and exercise sessions, the built-in heart rate sensor enables you to monitor your workout performance, and fashionistas can customise the face of the watch to their heart's content. Naturally, the Apple Watch also integrates beautifully with an iPhone and other Apple devices...

All you have to do to be in with a chance of owning one of these remarkable gadgets is answer the following question:

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE APPLE WATCH'S BRITISH DESIGNER?

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- B TIM COOK**
- C JONATHAN IVE**

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Artist Q&A

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See page 6 now!

The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

Bram Sels
Bram is a freelance illustrator and concept artist from Belgium. He's been working in the entertainment industry for two years, mainly for Belgian game developer Grin.
www.artofboco.com

Mark Molnar
Mark works as a concept and visual development artist in the entertainment industry, creating artwork for international film, game and animation companies.
www.markmolnar.com

Dave Brascalla
Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works both digitally and traditionally. He's produced film concept art and matte paintings.
www.pixelhuset.se

Tony Foti
Tony is a freelance illustrator who regularly contributes to Dungeons & Dragons and Fantasy Flight Games' best-selling Star Wars and Lord of the Rings lines.
www.tonyfotiaart.com

John Petersen
An education in biological and pre-medical illustration led US-based John to become an animator and designer at Engineering Systems, Inc. He's also a freelance illustrator.
www.petersenart.com

Question

How can I apply dirt and stains to a surface?

Sarah Skelton, England

Answer

Bram replies

 Layer masks are one way to give a clean surface, such as metal, a lived-in look. I often use masks because they help me to focus on the shape and form of the dirt while at the same time saving a selection of the pattern, which can always be changed later on if necessary.

Masks are fairly easy to use once you understand how they work, and they can speed up your workflow significantly. You can see them as a constant selection in which you work, and while the Lasso tool can help to do the same, the downside of it is that its selections are always fully opaque.

On the other hand, a mask is an image map in black and white that will instruct the layer to which it's applied to only show the parts from its map that aren't pure black. So areas of pure white will be fully shown, while grey parts will be 'half' shown depending on how dark they are. Now let's see how that knowledge can be put to use!

Mapping out dirt and stains in an organic way becomes easy when you make good use of layer masks.



Artist's secret

PHOTOGRAPHIC TEXTURES AS MAPS

You can also paste photographs in your masks. Look for some copyright-free metal textures online, paste them in your layer mask and boost their contrast to produce a range of sharp, chunky dirt spots.

Step-by-step: Make the most of your layer masks



- 1** Start by drawing the object you want to scuff up. In this case it's a suit of armour. Notice how the armour is constructed out of different metal elements that can be masked separately, so they can quickly be modified later on. When painting objects like these, try to understand how they're shaped. It helps you to paint on the dirt more logically.



- 2** For each material, I create a brightly coloured layer on top so they can be masked out separately. Using bright colours helps to see where your mask will have gaps. So if you can still see the underlying layers, go over them a second time. Now go to the Layers panel and Ctrl-click the thumbnail of one of the coloured layers to select its content.



- 3** Create a new layer and click Add Layer Mask at the foot of the Layers panel. Your selection becomes that layer's mask. Now fill the layer with a dark brown colour, click the Channels tab, hide the RGB channels and unhide your new layer mask. Using black textured brushes, paint over the white areas to clean up the armour and generate an organic dirt map.

Question

Can you help me paint fog in a scene that features a character?

Jang Carson, Canada



Fog always reduces the contrast and visibility of objects further away from the viewer. Reflect this by lowering the detail and contrast in the background – this will keep the focus on your character and the main story.

Imagine the fog as a stronger version of aerial perspective. If you add slight gradients of haze between the body parts of your character, you can strengthen the foggy feeling, but also can keep the depth of the figure.



Answer

Mark replies



The key for painting a foggy scene lies in your focal areas and their transitions into the environment. Fog reduces visibility and this will affect everything from the colours and light, to the edges and contrast of any objects in the area.

Using a limited colour scheme is the first step towards a successful composition, because the fog unifies the colours by toning down the amount of light scattering taking place in the scene. This also explains why you can't see cast or hard shadows in fog, so it's important to use a limited value scheme at the same time. The edges of objects become much softer in fog because of the reduced level of scattered light, and you can replicate this on the canvas by using various

levels of Gaussian Blur. Keep your focal area (in this case the soldier's head) as clean as possible, and strengthen the contrast by using the darkest and the lightest tones around these parts.

Because fog is a collection of liquid water droplets or ice crystals suspended in the air near ground level, it amplifies the effect of aerial perspective in your scene. Imagine all the objects, including your character, as huge mountains and then introduce various levels of aerial perspective to them. This will ensure your objects remain grounded. Use smooth gradients on sub-layers with the same colours as the background to lighten up the areas further away from the viewer. This will stop the scene from feeling enclosed and claustrophobic.



Artist's secret

USE BLUR FOR DEPTH

introduce various amount of blur to your image. Applying a slight blur to your character away from the focal area will create a nice variation of edges. This won't just help to add more depth, but will also strengthen the realism of your image.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question

What colour combinations can I use that best suit a calming image?

Enrico Messina, US

Answer

Dave replies



I once lived in a flat that had been decorated by a psychologist whose speciality was colour. Often startled at first, guests would later comment on how relaxed they felt in the deep-orange-walled sitting room. Our ideas about which colours are most relaxing are probably influenced by current trends and fashions, but it's hard to go wrong with soft greens and blues, along with cooler reds and red-violets. Restrained use of saturated hues can go a long way to achieving a serene mood: you can save them for smaller areas of interest, helping to direct the viewer's eye.

In my image, there's quite a lot of olive-greens tones creating the forest setting, mixed with some greenish-grey that appears blue in context with the green. For the water shallows, I use a cool red tone that's analogous to Venetian Red – one of my favourite colours to work with in traditional media. For the figure, I employ this same cool red tone as a base, and then make some thin passes with a blue-grey to cool it down and make her more pale. I use a little pale green as reflected bounce light on her arm, face and hair. The most saturated colour is the edge light on the mossy rocks, so I pull some of that over to the flowers in her hair to connect her with her setting. The final result feels richly coloured, yet still peaceful and contemplative in mood.



Flipping the hues with an adjustment layer results in an entirely new feeling with warm and cool areas transposed, yet the calm feeling remains.

Artist's secret
GOOD VIBRATIONS
I like to use temperature flutter in skin tones, which involves laying cooler colours over a warmer base of nearly the same value to create what I term a visual vibration. This effect can immediately make your skin tones more lively and interesting!



Sometimes the easiest and fastest way for presenting a certain mood to an art director is to create a digital collage from different photo plates.

Question

How can I quickly create an interesting environment for concept purposes?

Julie Tidby, England

Answer

Mark replies



Art directors often ask me to mock up something quick to establish an overall direction for a scene. For this I'll use photos and matte painting techniques to comp a scene together. It's much faster than simply painting everything from scratch.

The most important task is to find the best source material, so I usually spend half my allotted time gathering the exact reference photos I want to work with. I then create some rough scribbles of the overall composition; these help me to visualise my idea. I then try to find a base image that roughly matches my composition and has a

similar mood or lighting setup. After this I collect extra 'key' and 'enhancer' images. The enhancers can help to push the base image further, while the key photos can either make the final art look unique or add extra story elements.

It's crucial to match the lighting, colours and values of the different source materials, which then creates a unified look. I do this using layer adjustment options such as Color Balance, Curves and Selective Color. I also use the Match Color option (Image>Adjustment>Match Color...), which can match the colour and value structure of two layers containing different objects.



Question

How do I create weather particles such as rain or snow?

Katherine Phelps, England

Try to keep your particles on a separate layer on top. This means you can toggle them on and off at will.

Answer

Bram replies



I would avoid using a custom brush to mimic falling rain or snow, and instead move, scale and rotate layers of particles. Ask yourself how those particles appear in real life. For example, snow doesn't appear in a straight line in front of you, but instead falls over a large area. If you were to take a photo of it, there would be snowflakes



Flying sparks differ in intensity. So instead of white snowflakes, create yellow and orange stripes, duplicate the layer, blur it, and blend using Color Dodge.

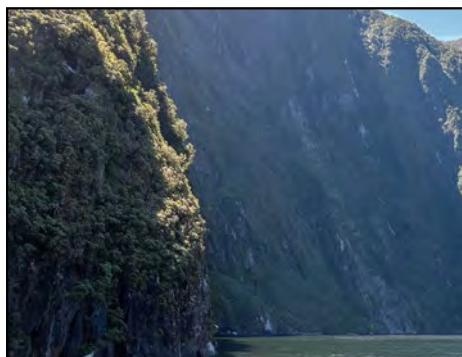
close to the camera but also far away from it, resulting both in sharply defined flakes or more blurred forms.

I start by placing my particles above all other layers and put a black layer behind them to see what I'm doing. My approach is to paint a middle layer of about 50 crisp snowflakes. I then duplicate that layer several times and fill the canvas up by rotating and scaling them slightly.

I then merge my layers, duplicate the new layer, apply Gaussian Blur, reduce its Opacity to 50 per cent and scale it up about four times. I'll often erase some of the closer flakes, because they can quickly get in the way of key areas of the painting.

I duplicate the layer again, or enlarge it if necessary. Once I'm happy, I delete the black layer and set the snow layers to Screen mode. Voilà, a cosy winter wonderland!

Step-by-step: Comp a scene together



1 I pick a base image that's close to my imagined composition and lighting scheme. This gives me a foundation to build on, and a reference palette that I can match the colours of the other source materials to. Here I'm using an image from Noah Bradley's free New Zealand reference pack (www.noahbradley.deviantart.com).

2 After some colour adjustments I comp more photos into the scene and paint in some parts, using colours that are present in the photos. I want to add more depth and detail to the image, and achieve this by layering the mountain ranges and adding more low clouds, fog and haze between them.

3 I want to create a cinematic fantasy image, so introduce more clouds – some painted, some from images using various layer blending modes. I add the classic pirate ship as my main focal point and repaint the lighting to guide the viewer towards that area, for better storytelling purposes.

ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question

My reference-based drawings look stiff and boring. What's the solution?

Paul Limpér, Sweden



The finished sketch has some value added in to separate the figure from the background. Even your brushwork becomes part of the design.

Answer Tony replies



Well, the short answer is to not actually copy your reference, but use it as a guide. I know this can be daunting when you're just starting out, but the key to creating a dynamic pose from a model or photo is being comfortable pushing, stretching and moving bits around to make the drawing say what you want.

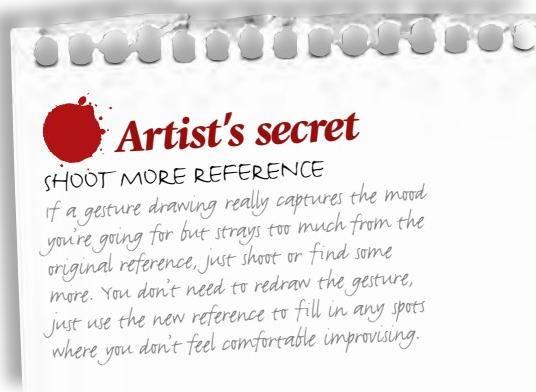
Part of this is just something that will come with time as you build up figure drawing mileage, but knowing what to



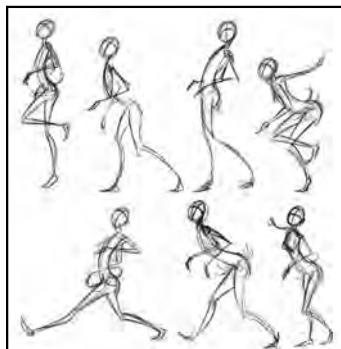
Hopefully the second drawing has a bit more gusto in it than the first, which copies the source directly.

strive for is half the battle. For this example I want to really emphasise energy and motion, so I'm drawing the singer, dancer, actress, military spy and Legion of Honour recipient Josephine Baker.

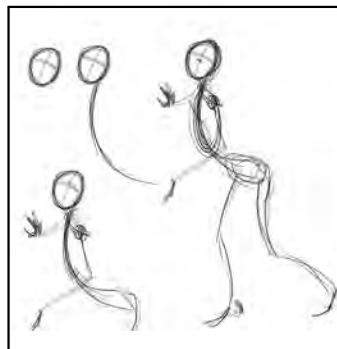
The first sketch I've made – the left-hand one of the two drawings below left – is a direct copy of the reference photo. Though I'm still making a lot of design choices in regards to line weight and what I leave out (that's just sort of drawing in general), shape-wise I've made no attempt to stray from the source image. With this as a starting point, I'll show you how I push the pose to convey an idea. My goal is to use gesture, structure and technique to tell a bit of story with the drawing.



Step-by-step: Start small and loose



1 Decide how cartoony you want to get, what aspect of the model you want to communicate (personality trait, physical feature, particular motion and so on), then try to tell that story with the pose. In my case, there is an excitement to Josephine Baker's live performances (or videos of them, at least) that I don't see in most posed photos. Conveying that will be my goal.



2 Technique and varying line weight can go a long way, but the foundation of a vibrant figure drawing is a descriptive gesture. Stay loose, experiment and have a clear centre line before adding in the limbs. Use fast, simple strokes to try out different ways of bending and stretching the body. Don't fuss with any single gesture, try out options until you find a pose that works for your theme.



3 Partly because it's better for a tutorial and mostly because it's my favourite, I'm going with the pose that strays furthest from the source material. I've used a lot of fluid, curved lines to get that bubbly mood, so it's important to now sketch in anatomy and make sure everything is still working proportionally. When you bend and twist the body, it's vital to double-check your structure.



4 As with the gesture and structure, you can push the character of the drawing by using thematically appropriate line work. An angry bouncer, say, might be drawn with short, straight, hard strokes. A drunk man stooped over a bar could be drawn with wavy, slightly disconnected lines. For this piece I'm focusing on smooth, jazzy curves that reinforce the happy mood I'm going for.

Question

Please help me give my metal objects a convincing old and rusty look

Jimmy McGoldrick, Ireland



There's really no mysterious trick to painting rust. Just add it on in rough patches and concentrate it in areas that might collect moisture.

Answer

John replies

 When painting rust on to bare metal, I find that it's often easier to paint the smooth metal surface first and then add the rust on a new layer afterwards. This will enable you to add and erase rusty areas as you see fit, without destroying the original material you created.

Rust usually tends to have a dull, rough appearance, alternating between brightly saturated reds and dark browns. To paint convincing rust, it helps to understand that rust grows in patches, and on bare metal it will come in as a raised texture. On painted metal it grows in between the layer of paint and the base metal, and over time pieces of the paint will flake off, leaving a scaly texture underneath. As you work on it, be sure to introduce plenty of grain and grunginess to the metal. For realism, where you add rust is also important. Rust has a habit of concentrating in areas where two separate pieces of metal touch each other, like rivets and seams. It also tends to form vertical streaking patterns from these surfaces, due to water flowing downward.



Iron oxide is a red, flaky powder that grows as a raised surface on bare metal. Just paint it on a separate layer and erase as needed.

Artist's secret

SPLATTER IT ON

I have a collection of splatter texture brushes that are great for roughing up textures to make them look gritty and damaged. Add them on a top layer set to Overlay or Multiply and experiment – the right look often comes from a happy accident!

Question

How can I cut a figure out so I can paint just its background?

Iona Campbell, Scotland



The character, with the new background painted in the back. I've added an Adjustment layer to the character, shifting him to a slightly cooler hue.

Answer

John replies

 There are many ways to do this in Photoshop, with several tools at your disposal. It will depend on background complexity, and also the contrast between your character's silhouette and the background pixels. The quickest way is, of course, the Quick Selection tool, which is just a brush that you use to paint your selection. It automatically detects edge pixels, and you can hold Option/Alt while painting to subtract from the selection if it picks too much.

The Magnetic Lasso tool is an option I prefer, because you can finely adjust its tolerance and frequency. Once you have your character selected, save that selection as a new channel just in case you need it later. Next, using that selection, copy your character to a new layer, then hide that layer. Now you can paint freely over your background with a nice broad brush, with your character preserved on its own layer.

Remember that the lighting on your character will change with the ambient lighting in the scene, so make sure to retouch the character afterwards. Reflective surfaces like polished metal and shiny armour will be especially noticeable if the lighting doesn't match. An easy way to get a jump on this is to add a Color Balance adjustment layer to your character and tweak the light to be warmer or cooler as the reworked scene demands.

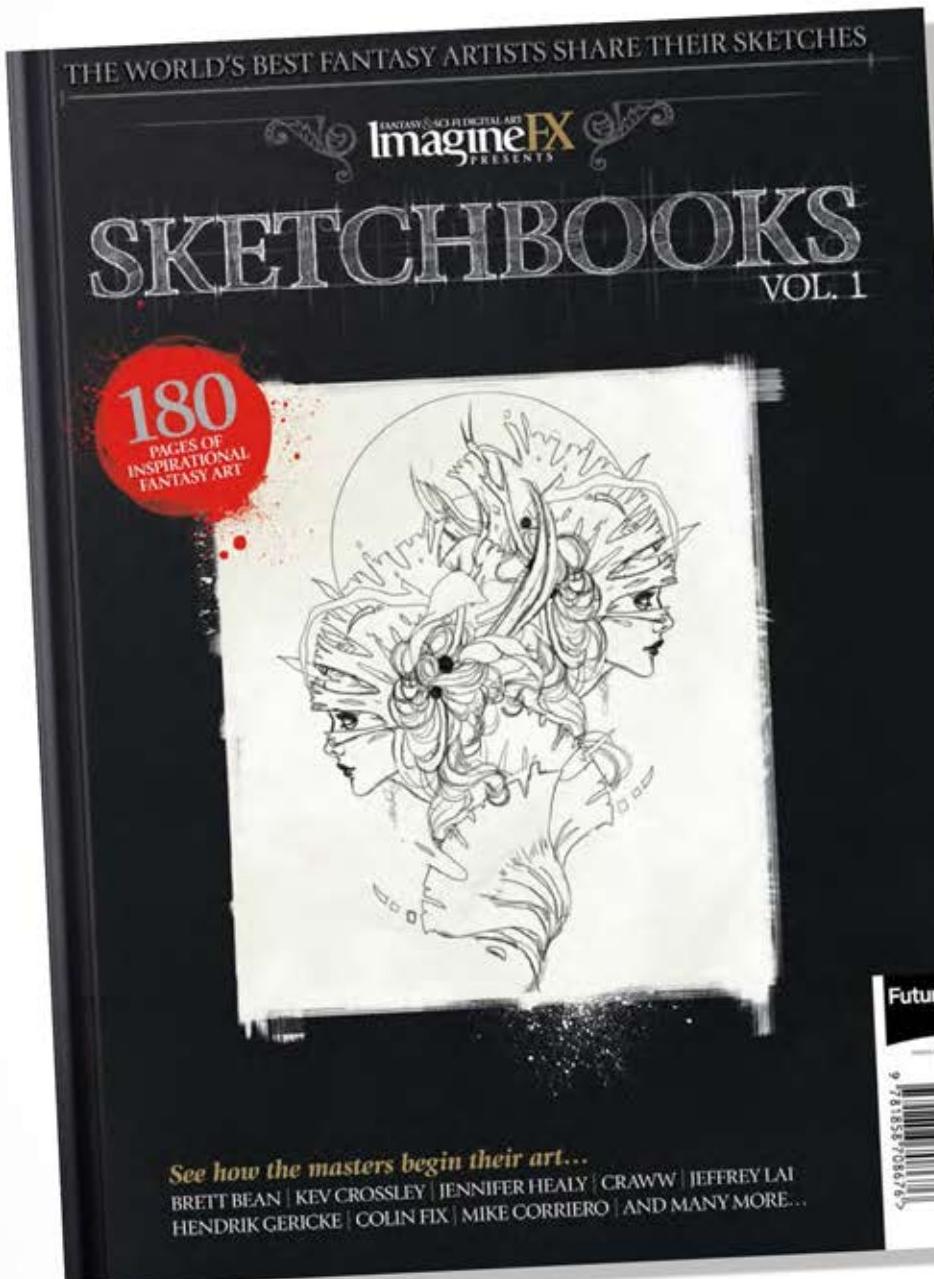


The original image with a very warm background. The Magnetic Lasso Tool wraps nicely around edge pixels much faster than the regular lasso.

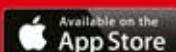


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Question

I think my basic drawing is not too bad, but what can I do to work on my design skills?

Anders Merson, US

Answer

Tony replies

I recently read an anecdote about a pottery group that may or may not be true, but I think the message is. A pottery teacher split her students into two groups. One half would spend the entire semester designing their perfect pot, the other half would be graded on the number of finished pots they produced. Once the final lesson was over, a competition was held to choose the best results. Half the students turned in their extensively researched pot designs, while the other half chose their favourite from the many they had made over the semester. After voting was over, it turned out that most of the pieces chosen were from the side that had made lots of pots.

The message is that experience trumps research when you're learning a new skill. Assuming that's true, I think a good strategy for honing your designer's eye is to make lots of compositions: nothing too complicated, just something where you can experiment with two-dimensional shapes and explore what you like.

You may not know who Patrick Nagel is, but he painted the album cover for Rio by 80s-supergroup Duran Duran. I think that his style of flat colours, clean lines and simple shapes makes for a fun kind of student exercise. That, and it gives me a reason to draw the Nagel-style image of British TV celebrity Sue Perkins that this world so desperately needs. Fair warning, a Google search for Nagel's art may get a little saucy.



Below is a drawing where I'm using fewer elements. I suggest at least trying a few where your goal is to use as few shapes as possible.



Don't stress about it, just have fun and create something you like. It may sound crazy, but the more fun you have, the more you'll learn.



With this exercise and pretty much all illustrations, I find it helps to keep all of my thumbnails in their own folder. Being able to scale and scroll through them is the easiest way for me to know which ones I prefer.

Step-by-step: Stay simple and experiment

- 1 Using the human figure as a starting point, try playing around with various poses cropped off in different ways. Draw small so you don't get tied down in details. The goal is to crank out a lot of thumbnails



in a short amount of time. You can get pose inspiration from reference image sites, photo shoots with friends and of course the trusty old mirror.

- 2 Draw shapes on different layers so you can move and scale them. Save a JPG every time you make a noticeable change, then look at all your images to see what stands out. Pay attention to where



shapes point, what's at the centre of your circles, and what the placement of your shapes emphasises. Direct the eye. Keep experimenting. Make lots of pots!

- 3 Like the figures and shapes, keep your colour palette simple. You don't have to use white for the skin (emulating Nagel), but try making things as compositionally exciting as possible with seven colours or less. Use contrast to draw attention where you want it. Matching hues on the figure to those on the background can help make the two feel harmonious.



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KILL RITA VRATASKI

"This is Rita from the manga version of All You Need Is Kill (Edge of Tomorrow), getting out of her robot armour.
I think Rita is cool." [Close](#)

“‘You will never do something like this,’ she said. I drew every day like crazy. By the end, I was awarded a gold medal”

ILYA KUVSHINOV

Russian trained with a love for Japanese culture, Ilya is making his name with his 'eidolon' images

All artists have to deal with criticism now and again, whether you're sharing your art with fellow forum users or getting feedback in class. In Russia, as Ilya Kuvshinov knows all too well, criticism can be somewhat brutal.

Aged 11, Ilya joined the Moscow State Academy Art Lyceum in the second year, so his classmates had a year's head start in voicing their brash opinions. "Before Lyceum I just drew. And everyone said, 'Wow, your drawings are cool,'" he says. "But when I got to the Lyceum, instead classmates were laughing at my work and my drawing habits."

For the first two months, Ilya kept his head down in the weekly sketch reviews, where the class got their teacher's feedback. After one too many D grades, Ilya's teacher called him into her office.

"She showed me a tiny drawing of a pumpkin, hanging on the wall over her desk. That drawing was awesome, so detailed and realistic. The teacher said

to me: 'Look at this drawing. You will never do something like this. Never.'

BIT HARSH

This was an art crit, Russian Art Academy-style, and though many would have given human resources a call, Ilya decided it was time to get serious. "Later that evening I decided that, no matter what, I'd draw a better pumpkin! I started to draw every day like crazy, remembering that word 'never'. To be honest, it was mostly rage at first. I decided to show her what I could do. By the end of the year I was one of the best in class. At the end of the Lyceum I was awarded a gold medal."

Though young, Ilya handled the situation with a maturity beyond his years. "Criticism is very useful, but you must always understand who's giving it out, and why," he says. "I guess [my teacher] was just disappointed in my progress, but after that she was proud of how I turned out."

It was around this time that Japanese character artist Renji 'Range' Murata ➤

Artist PROFILE

Ilya Kuvshinov

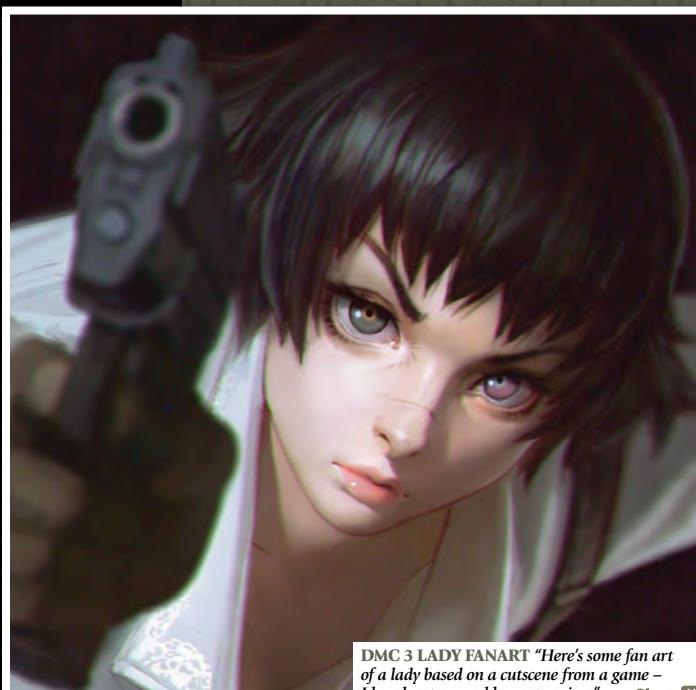
COUNTRY: Japan

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Renji Murata, Shigenori
Soejima, Alphonse
Mucha, Bernie Fuchs,

Pablo Uchida

SOFTWARE USED:
Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint

WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/ilyak>



DMC 3 LADY FANART "Here's some fan art of a lady based on a cutscene from a game – I love her pose and her expression." [Close](#)

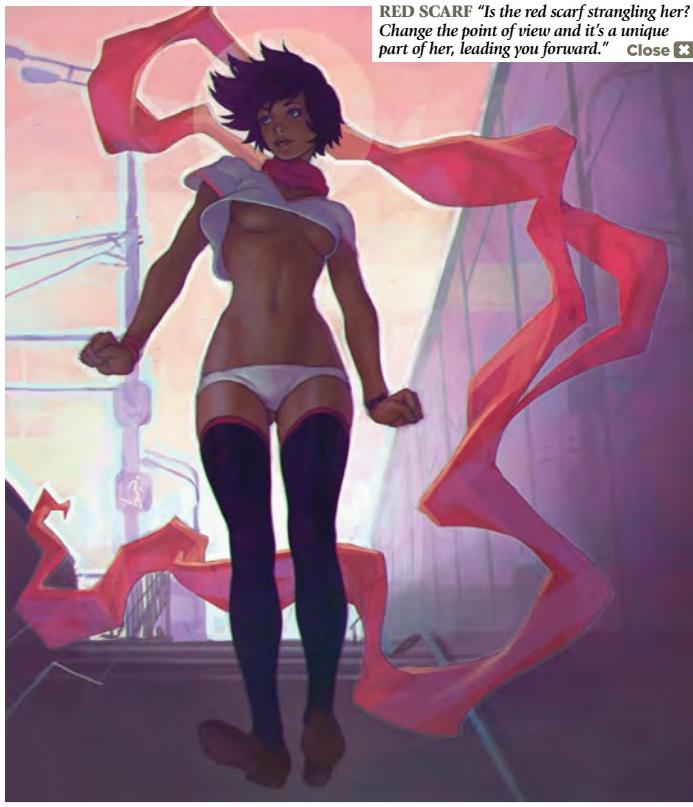


GRAVITY RUSH KAT "Gravity Rush was really good with its gravity flying concept, so I wanted to draw a flying Kat." [Close](#)

BIG ROBOT "This is something I did for composition and shapes training. Well, the background seems nice, maybe." [Close](#)

“I go out for a cup of ramen and when I get to the streets it's a big kick. I'm living my own dream”





→ came to talk at the Russian comic festival KomMissia. A manga and anime artist with art deco influences, Range's art was a revelation to Ilya.

Having already been blown away by Ghost in the Shell, Ilya was settling on an art path. But as his studies came to a close, he had to take any jobs he could find. "I've been working jobs since I was 15 years old. I've been a courier, I've collected data – asking people on the streets what shaving gel they use – and I've done some boutique window dressing."

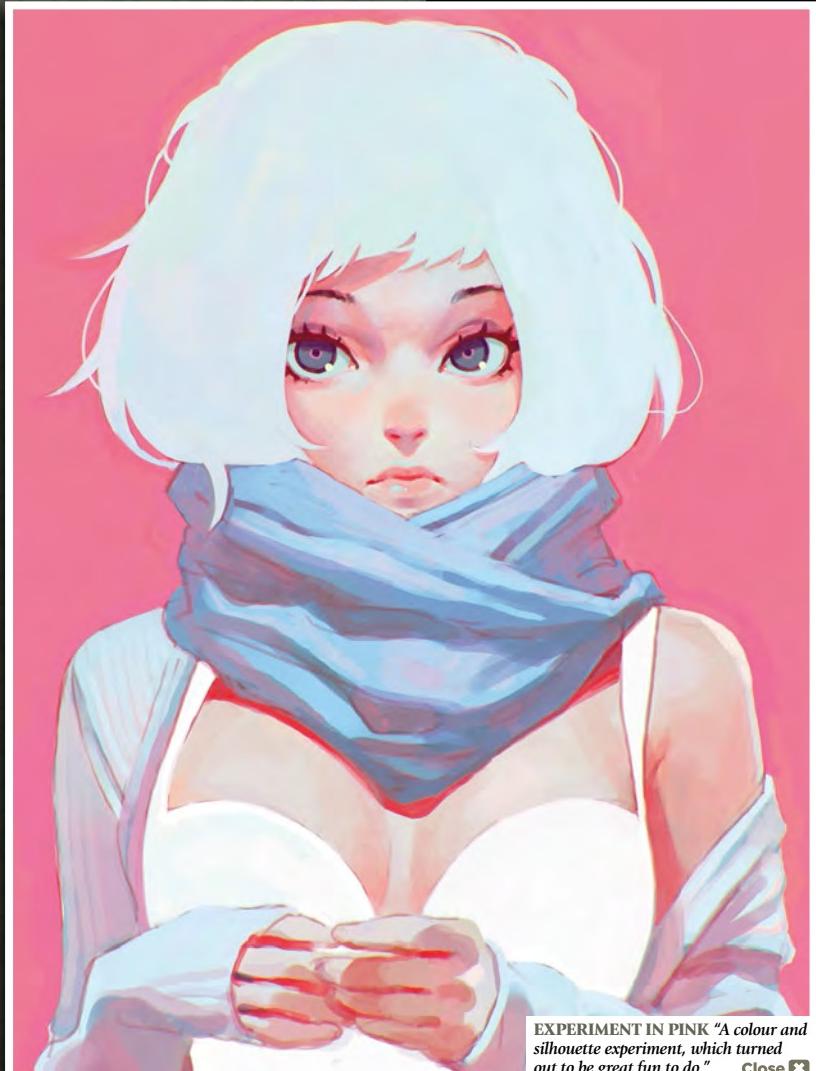
YOKOHAMA STREETS

It all paid off when Ilya secured his first concept art job in 2011, working in games. Today, he's based in his dream location. "I'm living in Yokohama, Japan, and, well, everything here looks exactly like in animes, but in HD," says the artist.

He's the first to admit his work ethic, forged by his training, can lead to solitary spells. Working in his room, hours can turn into days, "forgetting why I'm doing it or where am I. Then I decide to go out for a cup of ramen and when I get to the streets, it's a big kick that I'm living my own dream. It cannot be overemphasised."

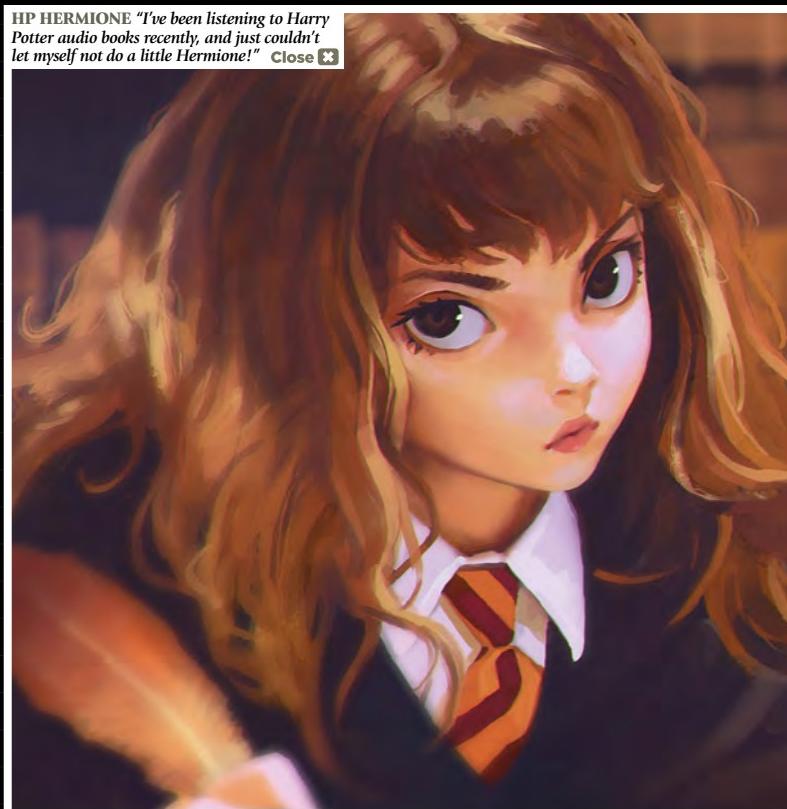
Since moving to Japan, Ilya has worked on characters for Tetsuya Mizuguchi's mobile game 18, and Epic Games Japan, but due to nondisclosure agreements it's his personal art that Ilya shows off on these pages. With their attention to light and loose stylus strokes, this is the art many online fans will know and love.

Ilya is the first to admit that his art is heavily focused on one subject:





FFXV NOCTIS "New trailers of FFXV were so cool, so Noctis in the rain was in my mind for a long time." [Close](#)



HP HERMIONE "I've been listening to Harry Potter audio books recently, and just couldn't let myself not do a little Hermione!" [Close](#)

HACHIKO'S NOSE

Dreaming of Japan as a child, Ilya finally moved there three years ago

"There is a game – my favourite one – called The World Ends With You. All of its action takes place in the Shibuya district of Tokyo, where there's a statue of the faithful dog Hachiko. It was a symbol for me and I decided that when I moved to Japan the first thing I'd do was touch the nose of Hachiko. I wanted to do it so badly that I found photographs of Hachiko on the internet and painted this picture to become closer to my dream. Now I live in Japan and I can touch Hachiko's nose as much as I want."

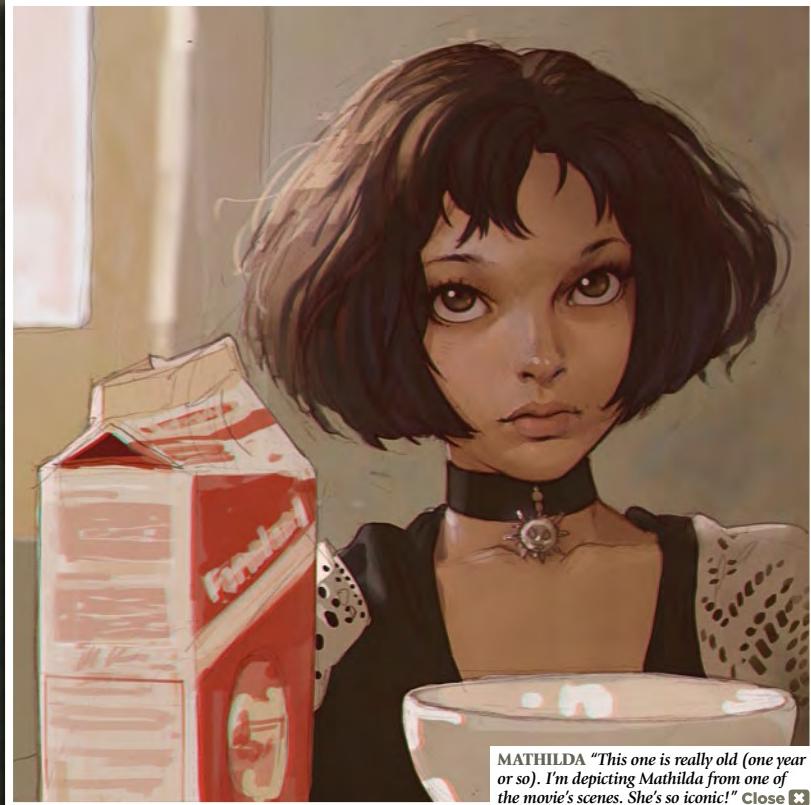


THE RIGHT REFERENCE Google Maps was among Ilya's references for this painting of a specific place in his beloved Tokyo. [Close](#)



SHIBUYA GIRL "This digital painting is almost entirely based on photo references I used to make Shibuya and Hachiko look and feel more real – for myself, I suppose." [Close](#)

LEOŠ JANÁČEK'S SINFONIETTA "I was walking and suddenly saw her, sat on the tower playing Leoš Janáček's sinfonietta." [Close](#)



MATHILDA "This one is really old (one year or so). I'm depicting Mathilda from one of the movie's scenes. She's so iconic!" [Close](#)

➤ women. This is hardly new for manga artists, but his reasons seem to be. "The appeal of the female form in my art? That's a huge topic for me. First of all, I'm personifying a female image, or eidolon, as a life itself," he says, describing his subjects as ancient Greek spirit images. "Because, well, women can give birth, every woman is a source of life, so every female form is a potential mother to me. When I'm drawing a woman in a story-driven personal illustration, it's not just some random girl, but in fact a great potential for changing the world into a

complex gestures. But, he tells us, "When I'm working for commissions like character design, storyboards or covers, I try to create poses and anatomy straight from my head."

STYLE FINDING

Ilya insists he's still in search of his own style. But even if that is true, with a strong online presence that includes a self-perpetuating art site, we're sure he'll find it soon enough. "I'm drawing personal illustrations and studies every day for free, and on my site people can support

“Every female is a potential mother to me. When I draw a woman, it has great potential for changing the world”

better place. I think there's nothing more important than this."

FIGHT FOR HAPPINESS

Having outgrown the desire to paint detailed still-lifes, Ilya says he wants to infuse his portraits with life itself. "I want to make stories that will help people fight for their own happiness, become aware of their own happiness and to help them grow as a person," he says.

Choosing subjects is a lot easier than creating life-affirming portraits. On his many trips to the streets of Yokohama, Ilya always carries his smartphone, snapping any backgrounds that catch his eye. He then asks his friends from his Japanese language class to pose for paintings, taking an array of photos of his hands for any

me in doing this," he says of his popular Patreon online art shop, which can be found at <http://ifxm.ag/ilyapatreon>.

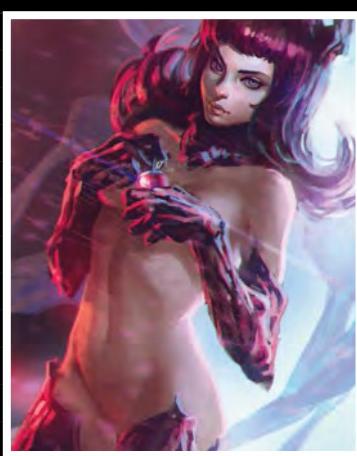
To say the site's a success is something of an understatement, with March's stats boasting 532 patrons pledging \$2,695 a week. For a \$10 pledge, you would receive all Ilya's weekly images with "undersketches", the full size PSDs, brushes, and his process video tutorials.

"The money I get [from the website] is used to finance my personal independent projects, which are free," says Ilya. "Right now I'm making my one-shot comic, and script for motion-comic too."

Two things are guaranteed: if you're a fan of Ilya's portraits, his site won't disappoint. And there definitely won't be any paintings of pumpkins. ♡



HEART "Happy Valentine's Day! This is something I did randomly. She's trying to be a cow. Cosplaying of course." [Close](#)



COLA "I wanted some cola, but I sat and drew. It turned out the girl was holding a can in her hands. I was too lazy to redraw." [Close](#)

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Issue 120

April 2015

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Issue 119

March 2015

Fred Augis' bright cover image is just a taster of what's inside this month's sci-fi art special. Our workshop artists concept a spaceship, show a planetary expedition and paint a space-age priestess. We also talk to Stephan Martinière about his futuristic art.



Issue 118

February 2015

Learn new tricks for the New Year as we concentrate on boosting your art skills. A raft of top concept artists, including Khang Le, Feng Zhu and Ian McQue share their ideas, and Yoann Lossel shows you how to paint with gold. Plus we chat to Bruce Pennington.



Issue 117

January 2015

Zap! Pow! It's all about the comic art this issue. Stanley Lau shows us how to create dynamic and compelling superheroes, Dave Kendall makes a horror page, and we chat to some greats of the comic field, including Alex Ross, Terry Dodson and Bill Sienkiewicz.

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LOCATION: Indonesia
PROJECTS: Forgotten Realms, Hellfire, Yu-Gi-Oh, Legend
OTHER PROJECTS: Ultimate Alliance 2, GI Joe: Sigma 6, Amazing Spider-Man, Transformers
WEB: www.caravanstudio.com



Dragon Knight by Crut.
This artwork was created as portfolio piece for a Japanese game company.

STUDIO PROFILE

CARAVAN STUDIO

With an abundance of talented in-house artists and its own publishing division, Caravan Studio is a true art powerhouse...

Caravan Studio – now with 33 full-time artists on the books – started with just a handful. They shared, according to co-founder Chris Lie, one vision: “A comic studio, where fellow talented Indonesian artists can get more opportunities to work on international projects”.

“Afif Numbo was an excellent comic artist with energetic stylistic style,” Chris says introducing his team. “And Crut was one of the



These mech designs are parts of *Colony*, an original graphic novel by Afif Numbo.

country’s best fantasy art digital painters. Hendry Iwanaga was an expert in merging western and eastern influences in his artworks. We started with only four artists and a 30 metre-square office back then, but now we’ve expanded almost ten-fold!”

Hendry explains further the origins: “I first met Chris when he gave a seminar at my college in 1998 and I was exhibiting my final project at the same time,” he says. “From there I knew about Caravan Studio and decided to intern

there. I started to work full-time after I finished my internship in January 2009.” Today Hendry’s job is studio manager – and he plays a big part in bringing new talent to the studio, just as Chris recruited him.

Chris himself is a renowned and talented artist, with an MFA in sequential art at the Savannah College of Arts and Design in Georgia, US, providing a fantastic foundation for Caravan. “I was working on various international comics, games and toy design projects,” he says, reeling off such IP as GI Joe: Sigma 6,

“We started with only four artists, but now we’ve expanded almost ten-fold!”



The Expedition by Crut, created during a Caravan demonstration workshop at @america.



A regular day at the studio. Everybody is busy working and listening to their own music. “It’s always pretty quiet, except when there’s free food,” says Chris Lie.

INDAR GUNAWAN

The digital artist discusses his role at the studio and his favourite projects...

What do you do at Caravan Studio?

As a digital artist I mainly illustrate game assets, card games, and sometimes I colour comics.

What have been your favourite projects since starting at Caravan?

That's a very tough question to answer, as there's been a huge amount of exciting projects so far. One of my favourites has been doing card illustrations for Konami's Yu-Gi-Oh! games, which is very popular here. I've also enjoyed some of the artworks I've done for the Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Master Guide.

How did you get the job? And what's it like to be working for Caravan Studio?

I started as an intern at the studio before applying for a full-time artist position and it's been nothing but an awesome experience. We work on many different types of projects - and some of them are for famous companies. The studio's working atmosphere is a lot of fun, with workmates who are always playful and cheerful, and senior artists and staff are also very helpful.

Do you receive any formal or informal training?

Being an intern to begin with meant I got a lot of on-the-job training. And I get a lot now, too! The studio conducts internal workshops every two weeks, where senior artists share their secret techniques with the juniors at the company.

What do you hope to achieve at Caravan?

I want to keep improving my art skills and techniques – all so that I can be involved in some even more challenging projects.

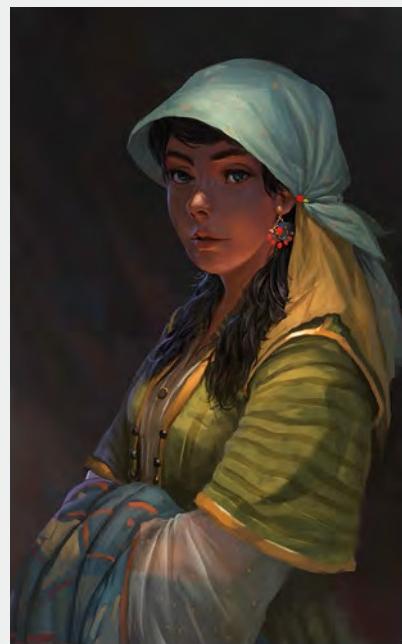


Odeise is one of Indar's personal works – a practice piece for depicting magical effects.



Indar made the most of his internship period at Caravan Studio and is now employed by the company as a full-time digital artist.

www.caravanstudio.com



Gypsy Woman by Rio Sabda. This image is part of the Ottoman project - a series of artworks set during the Ottoman Empire.



STAR cover by Nicholas Filbert and Rio Sabda. The book consists of art that has a western flavour.

▶▶ Transformers vs GI Joe, Dungeons & Dragons: Eberron, Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 and The Return to Labyrinth series (the latter being published by TOKYOPOP and making it on to The New York Times' Manga Best Sellers list).

PACKED PORTFOLIO

In its seven years in business, Caravan has gone from strength to strength, with a vast array of clients and top-name brands on its books. You can include character design for Marvel's Ultimate Alliance 2 video game; toy designs for GI Joe: Sigma 6, Iron Man, Amazing Spider-Man and Transformers; Forgotten Realms World Bible for Wizards of the Coast; illustrations for Star Wars, Hellfire and League of Legends games; and various comics and graphic novels in its repertoire. It's a portfolio to die for.

Wrathless Girl by M Faizal Fikri, created as a portfolio piece to study horse anatomy.

“We had the chance to illustrate the whole deck, packaging, promotional materials – but in only six weeks”

“Our favourite recent manga projects were Legend and The Chronicle of Vladimir Tod,” says Hendry. “Both are graphic novel adaptations from best-seller novels. Legend is based on novels by Marie Lu, illustrated by a team of all-female artists at the studio and led by Kaari. While The Chronicle of Vladimir Tod is written by Heather Brewer, illustrated by a team under Julia Laud.”

A standout project in Caravan’s history would have to be the Iron Man Special for Marvel Comics, pencilled by its very own Rahmat Handoko. “It took Rahmat nearly two years to finally break into Marvel

Comics,” explains Chris. “But he did it in style.” Rahmat’s pencil art for the special can be seen on the opposite page.

Another high-profile project in the lifetime of the studio is the Juara Nusantara card game, which combines software and printed cards bearing QR codes. “With this project, we finally had the chance to illustrate the whole deck, packaging, promotional materials, and basically everything – but in only six weeks!” says Chris. “We completed hundreds of great-quality cards, just in time for the game to be released at ➤



Covers from re:ON Comics, volumes one to 11. The magazine showcases art from Indonesia's best manga artists.

RE:ON COMICS

Chris Lie reveals the scale of the studio's successful move into publishing comics



In July 2013 Caravan Studio expanded into publishing, founding a comic company called re:ON Comics. "Re:ON

Comics caters for a pool of aspiring talented comic artists and illustrators under a professionally managed label. Its flagship product is six-weekly comic compilation magazine," says Chris Lie of the venture. "In less than two years, re:ON Comics has become one of the largest comic compilation publishers in Indonesia, in terms of print run, distribution channels and best sellers." Chris continues: "There are more than 50 comic artists from all over Indonesia collaborating with re:ON Comics. We're also in the final stages of our pilot animations and games, based on our managed IP."



SUN cover image by Nicholas Filbert and Depinz. The SUN artbook consists of projects that are inspired by manga and anime.



Goddess of War by Nicholas Filbert is part of the Exotic Illustration series. Nicholas is hugely inspired by Katsuya Terada's work.



Pencil page from Iron-Man Special by Rahmat Handoko, published by Marvel Comics. This issue is Rahmat's first work for Marvel Comics.

© Marvel



The Shipper by Crut is part of The Protector illustration series, set in a world where humans and creatures live in harmony, co-existing and protecting each other.



ReTunes by Angie at Caravan is a visual novel musical game, telling a rivalry story of two musical groups: deVa and Sacred.

→ Tokyo Game Show 2014. The project really pushed us to the limit in terms of speed, skill and team management."

MANAGING THE TEAM

Chris gives us an insight into how a project works at Caravan – clearly, managing 33 artists across many different projects is no easy feat. "When a project comes in," he begins, "the project manager will map out the client's requirements and expectations, devise a timeline plan, pass it to the head of production, and then keep the project in check.

"The head of production will also set up a team of artists to work on the project. In addition, there's also an art director who closely oversees the quality of the artworks. The project manager is the only one who corresponds with clients directly. That way, the artists are able to concentrate fully on the art."



“Like a family, we help each other to grow and be better artists”

As well as working for some of the world's biggest manga clients, Caravan is ambitious with its own IP. In addition to its own comic (see the piece on re:ON, over on page 53), the studio publishes annual art books – with the first, Cirque, being exclusively distributed by Wacom in five south-east Asian countries, which is bundled with the Intuos 4.

The subsequent three art books – Klown, Sun and Star – were independently distributed in Indonesia, Singapore,

The Keeper by Crut is another piece from The Protector illustration series. Crut's mastery in drawing animals has been perfected by his regular trips to the zoo.

Malaysia and The Philippines. Chris is justifiably proud of them: "Not only do these books showcase our artists' versatility, but also give them tremendous international exposure.

"Speed and style diversity are our forte," he says of Caravan's overarching appeal. And studio manager Hendry emphasises that even though it has a rising number of employees, Caravan works as one: "Like a family, we help each other to grow and be better artists."



PAINTING THE FEMALE KNIGHT

Caravan Studio's Margaretta Devi reveals her approach for illustrating beautiful manga faces



"Focus on the facial areas you want to stand out, such as the eyes and lips. Painting eyebrows and eyelids with thick lines that fade towards the end gives a more natural look. Add highlights, using the Color Dodge tool in Photoshop, on small areas like the pupil and lower part of the eye. Finally, some skin-tone colour on the lips will make the character look more natural."



1 Base colours

"I apply a base colour to the background and character, then highlights and shadows, reflecting colours on the metal. I detail the face and hair, and a transparent fabric to show a wind effect."



2 Tweaking details

"I notice that the hair isn't proportional with the body, so I simplify it to give her face more prominence. I make the background hill clearer, add floating islands, and colour the sky."



3 Lighting effects

"I enhance the staff's lighting effect by darkening the background with a Levels adjustment. I create the glow effect by using a Normal layer blending mode with an Outer Glow effect."



4 Colour tweaks

"To emphasise the mood, I add highlight details to the illuminated part of the staff, and flying leaves. After finishing the details, it's time for final colour adjustments, and I play around with Levels, Contrast and Saturation."

Sketchbook

Devon Cady-Lee

A long-held fascination with Frank Herbert's Dune has helped shape this artist's sketchbook...



EGGDROP

"I drew this based on what I imagined a big egg dropped on a face would do. I couldn't stop thinking about what this would feel like!"



Artist PROFILE

Devon Cady-Lee
COUNTRY: US



Devon is an illustrator originally from New York City, who's been working in the games and entertainment industries for nearly 10 years. He currently lives in Seattle, where he works for Motiga Games as a concept designer on the upcoming title Gigantic.
www.gorrem.tumblr.com

JESSICA

"A character from Dune, who's a concubine and love interest of a duke. I always thought she should be portrayed as a strong-willed character."



"My take on characters from Dune is based on close study of the text descriptions"

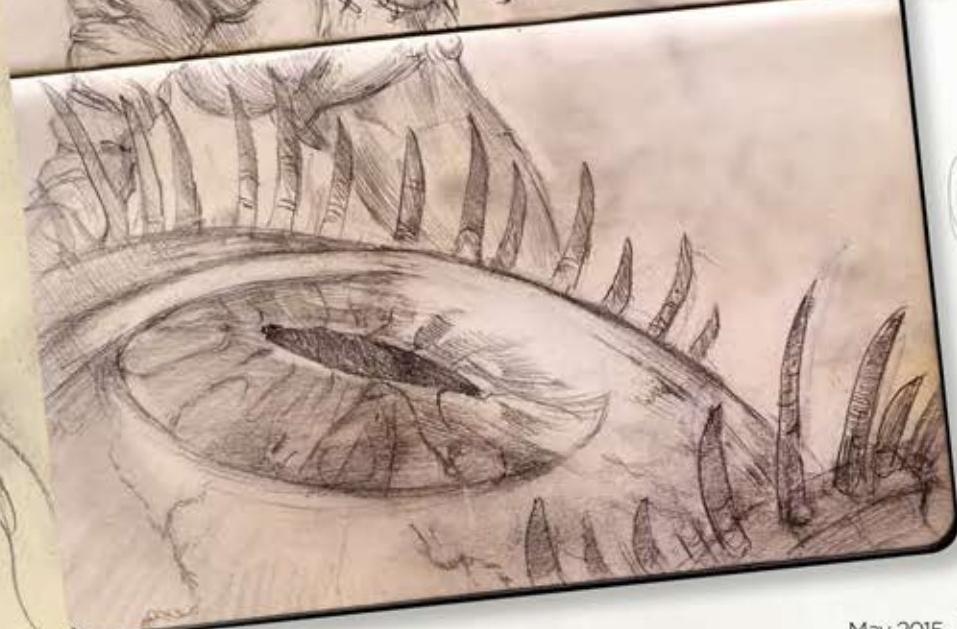
LONE WOLF

"I think this was inspired by Lone Wolf and Cub, a well-known manga. Sitting in a coffee shop sketching is where a lot of my drawings tend to happen."



STILGAR AND CHANI

"Portraits from Dune. My take on the characters is based on close studies of the text descriptions, as well as my own artistic licence."



EYESTAB

"My worst fear is being stabbed in the eye, and that's pretty much what inspired this sketch."

Sketchbook



MORNING AFTER

"Sometimes that moment in the morning is so awkward, you've just gotta laugh!"

CARICATURES

"Here are some digital sketches of comic book characters and people I saw one day. One of them is a character from Y: The Last Man!"

YA JUST CAN'T

"People sketched in a café. Observing people in their natural habitat reveals expressions that I don't normally see from a model."



"Observing people in their natural habitat reveals expressions I don't normally see from a model"



WANDERER

"A creepy dude with his eyes burned out, who's also from the Dune books. I tried to capture an urgent feeling in his pose."

PAUL

"Paul Atreides from Dune, as a hipster I guess? I'm really into this sci-fi classic."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com

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**Workshops assets
are available...**

Download each workshop's WIPs, final image and brushes by turning to page 6. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



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Bright colours help to bring Paul Kwon's confident punk duo to shimmering life.

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Swiss artist Jade Mosch uses traditional pastel skills to produce a stunning example of illustrative art.

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Learn the Layers features in SketchBook Pro with Paris Christou.

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Valentina Remenar combines artistic styles to create a sci-fi warrior.

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Brett Parson creates a monster, using SketchBook Pro and Photoshop.

82 Paint a manga environment

FeiGiap gets inspiration from around him to paint a nostalgic manga scene.

Photoshop

USE COLOURS TO MAKE YOUR MANGA ART POP!

Bright colours that work well together help to bring **Paul Kwon's** confident punk duo to shimmering life

Artist PROFILE

Paul Kwon
COUNTRY: US



Paul is a concept artist in the games industry, producing artwork and TCG imagery for Blizzard and others, and side projects for his Patreon page.
<http://ifxm.ag/p-kwon>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

My goal in this workshop is to produce a cool image of a chromatic punk duo for ImagineFX's manga issue. To achieve this, I want to challenge myself to use a range of colours cohesively to create these characters, then give them a confident outlook and a positive attitude to life. I've always been a fan of anime and manga and the unique art styles on display, so this illustration assignment should be a ton of fun!

I'm keen to make the most of my colours, and I'm prepared to spend time experimenting with them to get it right. I imagine that the two characters are partners, who share some visual characteristics. This will be my first time

painting an adorable rainbow unicorn, so go easy on me!

It usually takes me a bit of time and preparation to really get in the mood to create a particular piece, before diving into the painting process. For this illustration my research comprises looking through anatomy images and references of materials, and watching some anime. I want my human character's dress sense to reflect her character, and a good example of this will be her collars, which will be exaggerated and very pointy! I'll also be furnishing my characters with stylish accessories that act as interesting story elements.

Okay, that's enough preamble from me – let's get painting!

How I create...

AN ORIGINAL DYNAMIC DUO



1 Warm up by sketching

I spend time researching to get a feel for the subject, then produce some rough thumbnails. This also acts as a warm-up exercise. Once I've picked a good thumbnail sketch, I do another pass to clean up the shapes, compositions and design. I keep the drawing rough, which will give me room for experimentation later on.

2 Stick to the line work

I set the line work to Multiply and paint underneath the line, so I don't go off-piste too early. I start with a mid-range value because it's easier and faster to push and pull the volume. I try to retain the feeling and emotion by playing with the colour temperature. Rather than focusing on one area, I develop the image as a whole.

3 Progressive painting

Once I'm happy with the base colour, I merge the characters' layers and begin painting on top. I use the soft Airbrush to keep everything organic and smooth looking, and gradually switch to finer and harder brushes. I experiment with filters and colours, keeping an eye out for happy accidents that might produce awesome results.

Flowing focal points

Using the shapes and complexity of the design, I made sure that the character's face draws the viewer's eyes first, before moving on to the V-shape of her hand or the unicorn side-kick. This takes the viewer into a loop that makes the composition strong and interesting.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:

1.1

1.2

1.3

SOFT AIRBRUSH

Here are some of the brushes I used for this image. I stuck to the soft Round brush during the early stages of the painting, then used sharp to soft tapering brushes for the final polish.

Stylish hair

To achieve the look of the hair, I use a combination of Multiply, Color Dodge, Overlay and Screen layers. I also play around with the Curves tool, Hue/Saturation and Color Correction. My aim is to ensure her hair looks stylish and colourful, and that it frames her face nicely.

Sparkling art

I use a custom dust brush to produce the glittery effects on the outfit. I apply it on a black-filled Color Dodge layer.

**Greater vibrancy**

I use saturated colours on a Screen layer to give more vibrancy to colours in the shadows. By filling a Color Dodge layer with pure black, you're able to introduce much more colour vibrancy, as you can see here.

Photoshop DIGITAL PASTEL TECHNIQUES



Jade Mosch uses her traditional pastel skills to produce a stunning piece of illustrative art, inspired by Asian themes

Artist PROFILE

Jade Mosch

COUNTRY: Switzerland

 Freelance artist Jade has a degree in multimedia design and also studied illustration at art school. She loves to paint animals and fantasy scenes.
<http://ifxm.ag/jmosch>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

PRO SECRETS

Using a limited colour scheme

You don't need to have a lot of colours to make your picture seem colourful. Instead, use a global colour that could be desaturated, and pick a part of your picture that will be highlighted by a highly contrasted colour from another range (such as blue and orange, or red and blue). Any other added colour will be a variation of the main colours.

The main differences between digital and traditional painting are that with digital we have the possibility of going back in time on your art, as well as the use of layers, and an amazing palette of post-production tools at our disposal. Unfortunately, having all these digital tools can also help make our working process chaotic and disorganised. We can easily become lost among numerous layers and effects. My way of working is much simpler. It's inspired by pastel

techniques, but adapted to the digital way of doing things.

Pastel is a traditional painting method that uses dry media. They're little sticks of pigment powder that you squeeze over the paper. Unlike oil or acrylic, it's volatile and very easy to drag over your picture. Basically, it's a cyclical approach where you blur a bunch of colours together, and then go back to define your subject. The result is a richly coloured picture. In my painting here I'll be using this process – only digitally, of course.

I'll also reveal some tricks for not getting lost in your canvas – even if you're a disorganised person like me! Actually, when you work digitally there's always a way to save your picture. I'll work over a traditional line, and show you how powerful layer effects can be.

For this workshop, it'll be helpful if you're already familiar with the Channels and Layers panels, because these will be the main tools I'll be using. And I'll paint with only a few basic Photoshop brushes – let's keep things simple!



1 Sketch and values

I sketch out an idea and then add details, paying attention to composition, anatomy and design. Then I create a duplicate of my file (Image>Duplicate) and merge the layers (Cmd+Shift+E). I increase the size of the picture, making it no bigger than 800px wide, so neither my computer nor Photoshop will lag. I paint the main shapes in greyscale.



2 Develop a colour scheme

When I think the balance between black and white is correct, I add colour to my sketch. My aim is not to have something precise, but to get the harmony right. I limit myself to three main colours, and then play with Saturation. And to avoid being distracted by details, I blur everything using Gaussian Blur. This means I stay focused on colours and composition. ➤



Workshops

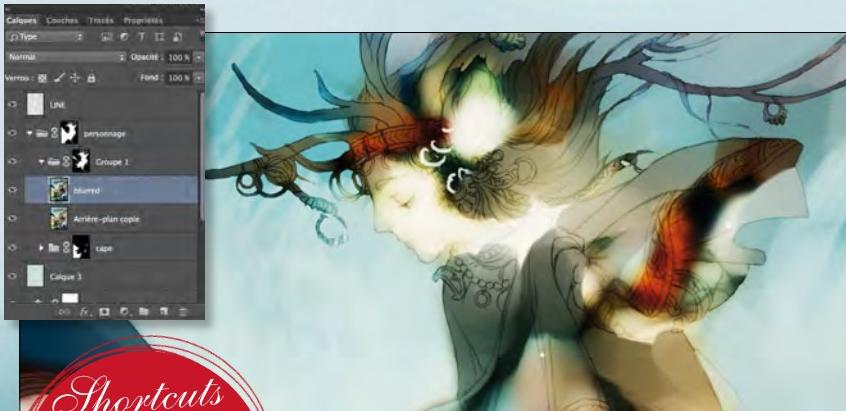


3 Scan in the sketch at high resolution

I return to my original detailed sketch, scan it in at 300DPI and I adjust the contrast to achieve pure white and black. I have to clean my drawing from dirt that came with the scan. Then I create an empty layer. I go to Channel and select the picture (Cmd+Shift+ click), then use Invert (Cmd+Shift+I). I go back to the layer and fill it with the Paint tool.

4 Preparation and grouping layers

To help with organisation (and I need all the help I can get!) I prepare layer groups and a mask for each section of the composition. I'll be able to merge my layers later if necessary, without affecting my selections. I use the Magic Wand tool, select Invert to capture the main shapes, create a new layers group and then mask it. Then I clean the mask (click+Alt).



5 Initial colours and blurring

I go back to the first, blurred, colour sketch and add it to each group. I use my personalised finger brush to smooth and build better forms. Those basic layers will serve as the foundation for my colouring. Now I only need to work over my sketch and paint with the help of the Eyedropper tool.



6 Building the first volume

I make a first render test on what I think is the most important part of the picture. This will serve as a reminder of how much I need to work on the rest of the painting. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it's the face. Then I paint over the rest of the body, to develop the basic volume and introduce more colours.



7 Muscle and fur

I use a slightly more textured brush to paint the animal parts. When I paint, I make sure that some strokes go in different directions. I paint in a perpendicular fashion: this helps to make my painting look less flat, and give my objects volume. I also add grey to the shadows.



8 Correcting colours

Unfortunately, I think the painting is now too colourful, with not enough subtlety. I want something more winter and cold. In greyscale I sketch in a forest background, and use Color Balance, Saturation and Curves to produce something that pleases me. This is an experimental phase. I focus on enhancing the blue mood, and use the Curves tool increase the contrast.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES
PERSONALISED FINGER BRUSH



I use this brush for smooth blurring and to develop a traditional feel.

BASIC PERSONALISED BRUSH



I regularly use this brush for painting. It's a basic Photoshop brush with just a few modifications.



9 Merge main layers

Next I choose each main part of my drawing, make a copy and then merge layers. Again, the result is that I have different parts of my picture on their own layers. I don't want lose the first version of the picture, so I do all the merging on the duplicate of the work. It'll also work as a back-up copy... just in case.



10 Working on the background

The character isn't finished yet, but I choose to take a step back and work on the background. I paint with my custom finger brush, and keep adding little strokes of colour to make the forest emerge from the background. I use some different colours to give it more life. When you don't zoom in you have the feeling that it's the same colour, with subtle variations.

PRO SECRETS

Sketching small

By doing your first sketch and colour research on a small canvas (72DPI), you avoid focusing too quickly on details. You can look at the whole picture and can easily add textures and colours without increasing the file size significantly. You can also try out effects for later use on your finished drawing.



11 Adding clothing details

I paint the character's cloak in the same way as the background. I want to give it an illustrative feel, and here I use pastel colours. When it's finished, I add a texture to give it more depth. I paint with a slightly darker colour in areas where I want the line work to be more visible.



12 Highlighting and rendering

Once the background is finished, I continue to work in the same way on other parts of the painting. I limit my use of black and instead choose grey or complementary colours, to imply reflected light. It's a stylistic choice, because it can either reduce your volumes or increase your contrast. I also use a mix of red and greyish green to mimic the texture of the clothing.



13 Colour adjustments

Now that everything is rendered, I go in and tackle the final details. I enhance the contrast of some areas by making them either darker or lighter. It's an exploratory approach; if I didn't test everything, then I wouldn't know if my final picture was the best it could have been.



14 Focus and final touches

I can't add these details and effects effectively if the picture isn't merged. So this is my third and last duplicate, where I merge my picture into one layer. I copy this layer and give it a slight blur. I use the Mask Overlay so that only some parts are blurred. Then I apply the last stroke of snow to add a bit more movement, and voilà! I hope you enjoyed my workshop.



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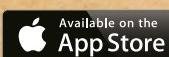
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SketchBook Pro

TAP INTO THE POWER OF LAYERS

Learn all the Layers features in the new version of SketchBook Pro with a three-step basic formula by **Paris Christou**

Layers, and how they work, are an integral part of SketchBook Pro's flexibility.

To those unfamiliar with the term, a layer is an image stacked on top of another, and they are the building blocks to a piece of artwork.

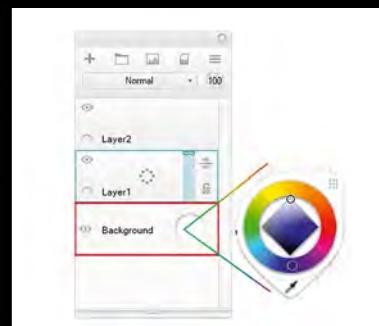
Imagine SketchBook Pro layers as glass that you can see through. So for example if I were to draw or paint a clear blue sky

on a piece of glass (a layer) and then add another piece of glass (a new layer) on top, I can still see the painting of the blue sky below through the new layer. This is useful to the digital artist because they can just draw and paint a forest on the new layer that will go together with the clear blue sky.

Okay, let's see how SketchBook Pro helps you manage your layers.

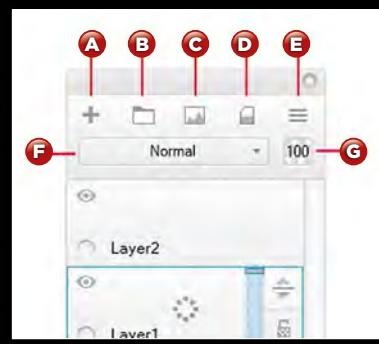
1 The background layer

The background layer enables you to change the colour – and therefore the fundamental mood – of your canvas. To do this in SketchBook Pro, you simply click the big white circle on the background layer to open the colour wheel, and then you need to select the colour of your choice. Turning off the eye icon on the background layer will give you a transparent background, which some may find useful.



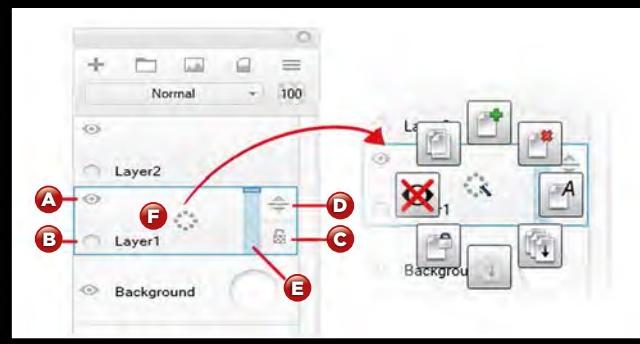
2 The Layers panel

All the features on the Layers panel are shortcuts designed to help you manage your SketchBook Pro layers. They are as follows: Add a new layer (A); Add a new group (B); Add an image (C); Clear anything on a selected layer (D); Drop-down menu of all the options of the Layer Editor (E); Drop-down menu of all the Blend Modes (F); and finally The Opacity bar (G). Once you get used to them they're really useful.



3 Your layer options

Here are all the features on a layer that you can manipulate in SketchBook Pro: Hide/View a layer (A); Colour label your layers (B); Lock the Transparency (C); The Opacity bar (D); Drag a layer (E); and finally, Click and hold down to launch the layer options (F). Then flick any of the following icons: Add Layer, Delete Layer, Rename Layer, Merge All, Merge with Below, Lock Layer, Hide, Duplicate Layer.



Artist PROFILE

Paris Christou

COUNTRY: Cyprus

Paris is a 2D animator, illustrator and teacher. He's also the founder of ToonBoxStudio.com, a site that offers illustration, and 2D and 3D animation courses. <http://ifxm.ag/tbstudio>

GETTING STARTED WITH LAYERS



A. Blueprint sketch

I prefer to start by sketching loosely on layer one, scribbling out my blueprint to form my artwork. I experiment, enjoy making mistakes and trying to solve them. I don't stress over perfect lines, but instead focus on the forms, shapes, gestures and composition. Once I finish the artwork, I merge all the layers and save the image.



B. Creating the line art

I reduce the Opacity of the sketch layer to about 50 per cent and create a new layer above this layer. This is the clean-up stage where I'll carefully draw the clean lines over the rough sketch with a black pencil using a feathering technique. I'm careful to observe the blueprint below and concentrate on the thickness and value of my line art.



C. Colouring the artwork

Now that I have the clean line art, I turn off the rough sketch layer and create a new layer between the line art layer and the rough sketch layer. The new layer will be my colour layer, and I use the Round brush and the Airbrush to colour my artwork. Once I've finished my artwork, I merge all the layers together and save the image.



Clip Studio Paint Pro DESIGN A MANGA CHARACTER

Thinking of working up your own character concept into an illustration? **Low Zi Rong** shares his step-by-step process for doing just that...

Artist PROFILE

Low Zi Rong
COUNTRY: Singapore



Low is a character designer at Collateral Damage Studios. He came up with Inori Aizawa's look for Internet Explorer.
www.collateralds.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

Coming from a hobbyist background, I started out by drawing fan art of my favourite cartoon and game characters, just for fun. Like other artists who I spoke to, I thought it would be good practice to include new characters from my own imagination into my illustrations. That was when I learnt painting an appealing character design based on a concept wasn't as straightforward as simply imagining it.

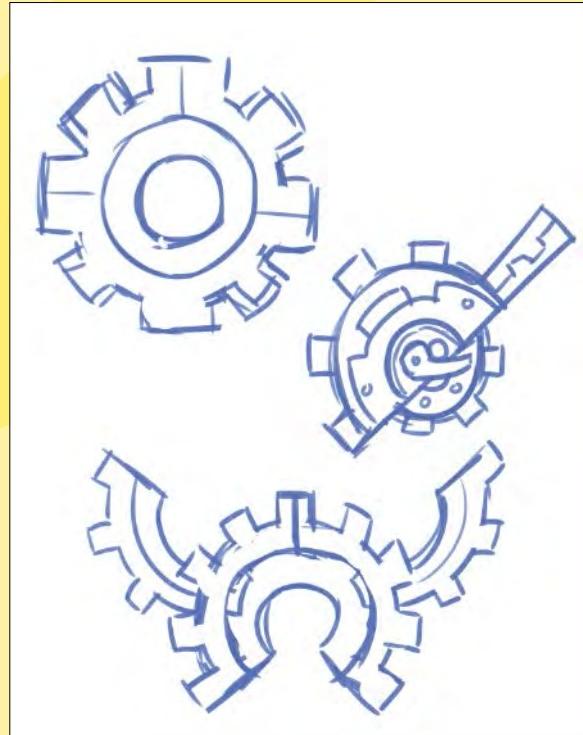
A cool character design that exists only in your head might not look as good once

you've put it down on paper. There might be some features that either just seem 'off' or uncharacteristic of the figure you had in mind. But until you try to visualise your creation on the canvas, how are you going to know?

Over the years I've picked up useful steps and pointers to help build up a character with plenty of personality, but who's also visually interesting. Given how important character design is for anime- or manga-related illustrations, grasping these concepts will be useful for any aspiring character illustrator.

In this workshop I'll be sharing my design process for creating an appealing character with personality. I'll start by coming up with a simple story and premise, then explore the various potential aspects of the character, introduce additional details to get her to stand out and, finally, apply the finishing colouring touches to bring her to life.

Do note, however, that while the art direction in this workshop veers towards an anime or manga style, the methods I'm sharing can still be applied to most forms of character design.



1 Create a story

Before jumping into the design sketches, I'll usually examine the character's background and setting. If there are no settings provided, I'll create one myself and make notes about it. That might come in useful later in the design process. Personally, I like to create cute characters in interesting fantasy game settings, and so for this workshop I'll design a mage girl who can manipulate time.

2 Pick a design motif

I usually choose a motif or two based on the theme, which can be applied to my character. As well as establishing a good point to start the visual conceptualisation process, it also provides consistency for the character design. In this case I choose gear cogs – a key component of clocks – as the motif. ➤

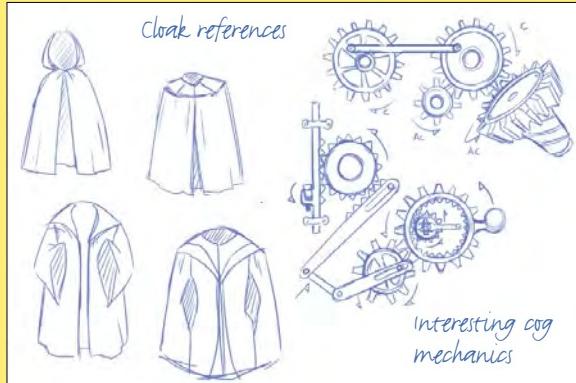


Workshops

PRO SECRETS

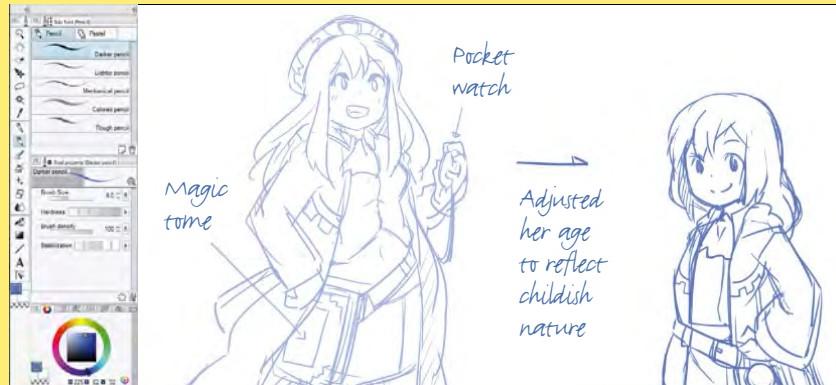
See the big picture

Sometimes when you're absorbed in getting a particular portion of the drawing correct, such as a character's hand, you zoom in to fix and clean up the error. Then, when you're done and zoomed out, you realise that the hand is now far too small in proportion to the rest of the body. Always remember to check that your proportions and perspectives are correct in relation to the rest of the body.



3 Research and references

Next, I look up references for the character. These can range from fashion, suitable gadgets and equipment, to the world the character resides in. They don't have to be used in the final design, but I find it useful to have a library of images to take inspiration from. If I want to include realistic workable gadgets or objects, this is when I'll research how they work.



4 Design roughs

I now draw some quick sketches of the character, including a few variations that might work. At this point the designs doesn't have to be super detailed. I take it as a challenge to push my imagination and draw several designs based on the theme. Invariably, this helps me think of some new ideas that can be applied to the character.

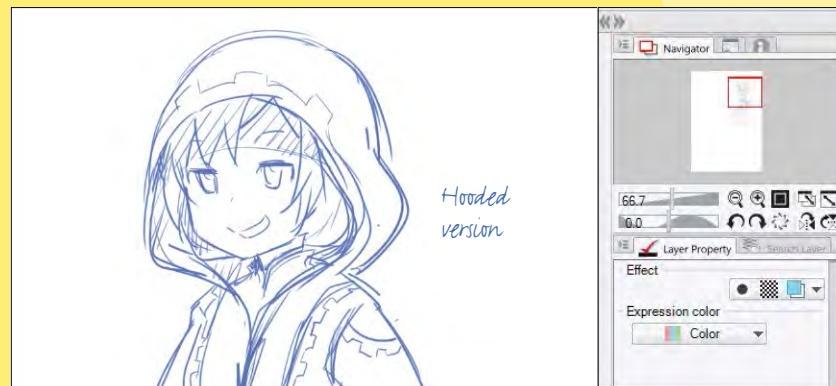


5 Narrowing down selections

After a few iterations, I pick the base design I'm most satisfied with and incorporate aspects of the other designs I like, too. At this stage, I add a little more detail to the design. You may notice that here I also apply the design motifs I've picked, to parts of the design that I think will best support them.

6 Applying character traits

Here I'm referring to the characteristics I want to depict when considering the character design. For example, I imagine that if the girl can manipulate time, she'll be a cheerful but lazy person. I can then reflect this laziness in the way she dresses, in her unkempt hair for example. She wears a hooded cloak over a simple garment, demonstrating her unfussy clothing choices.

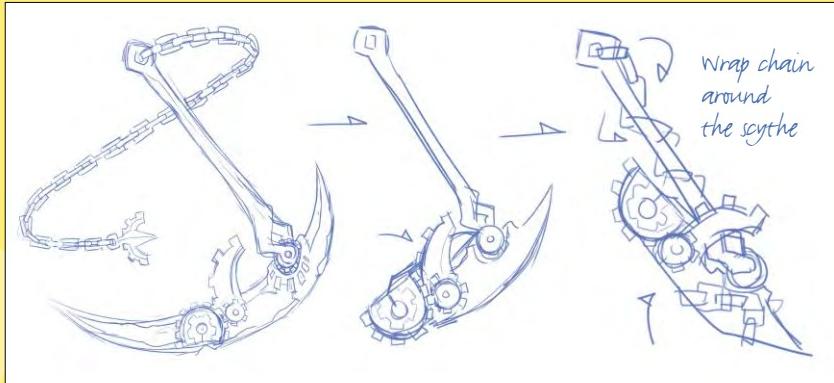


7 Fashion form and function

The story setting is also a great way of shaping the general direction of the character's fashion and its function. For example, a knight in medieval times should be wearing medieval armour, not armour made of cloth. I imagine the girl is something of a prankster, able to manipulate time to suit her ends. She wouldn't want to stand out in situations, and so the hooded cloak helps to disguise her and her assortment of gadgets.

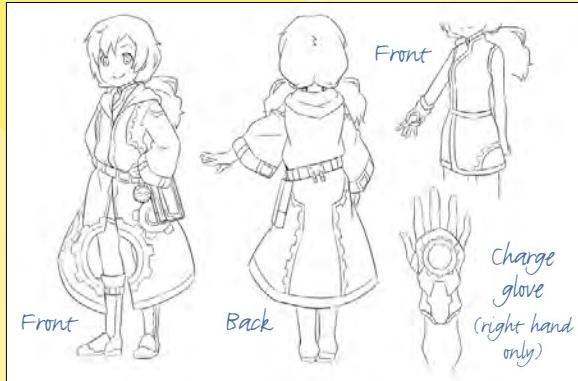
8 Adding gadgets and equipment

It's time to flesh out the designs for additional gadgets and a weapon for the character. Although not always necessary, gadgets and equipment are another good way for your character to stand out from the average crowd in stories. A futuristic glove gadget that glows when she's using her spells helps to add more visual interest to the concept.



9 Challenging stereotypes

Instead of the staff you might expect a mage to wield, I choose a chained scythe as her choice of weapon. There's nothing wrong in keeping with tradition, but whenever the chance presents itself I like to challenge the norms. Apart from just looking cool, the pendulum end of the chained scythe symbolises time, which neatly matches her theme.



11 Make a reference sheet

Reference sheets are more widely used in professional media productions, such as games or animation. The aim is to standardise the look and key features of characters for everyone involved. Usually I'll draw a proper reference sheet of the front, back, side and a 45-degree view of the character. For personal use, it's up to you how detailed you want the sheet to be.

10 Fiction and reality

Another consideration in designing characters is that the figure should look believable, given the constraints of the story and the setting it's built around. This is especially important if you're designing something based on someone else's story. On that note, exaggerating features and traits will help to make the character stand out, but overdoing it will reduce the believability and lower their appeal. I want to make sure the gadgets and weapons are concealable and her design can blend in with the other characters in that world.



12 Establish a colour palette

Apart from setting the basic colours for the character sheet, sometimes multiple colour schemes for different light settings are required. Although we won't be going into that for this workshop, I want to show the difference in the colours when the gadget is activated compared to when it's turned off. The point of the reference sheet is, after all, to be a guide to the details of the character for any future uses.



13 Expressions and action poses

On my character sheet, as well as a basic pose, it's good to sketch a few varieties of expression to convey a character's nature and mannerisms. I draw some common expressions, and then expressions unique to her. I also like to draw some action poses with different expressions, as though straight out of a scene in the story. This is when you breathe life into the character.

14 Illustrate your new character

I finish off the process with an illustration to showcase the newly designed character. It's best to choose a pose that best depicts the character, such as a model on the cover of a magazine. Here, I pick a dynamic pose that pops out to the audience and showcases the cheerful nature of the girl. Now go out and show the world the new character you've designed!

PRO SECRETS

Identify errors in your art

Search for a mirrored image of Abraham Lincoln online and you'll be surprised to see how different he looks from the original image. The same can be said for your art, which is down to your drawing habits. Flip your canvas from time to time to identify and correct more obvious mistakes.

Photoshop & ZBrush PHOTOBASH YOUR MANGA ARTWORK

Artist PROFILE

Valentina Remenar
COUNTRY: Slovenia



Valentina is a freelance illustrator who produces art for games, cards, posters and books. She paints alongside her twin sister Marina, who's two minutes younger than her.
<http://ifxm.ag/val-rem>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

Valentina Remenar shares her process for designing a sci-fi warrior by combining different painting styles

This painting was created as a poster for a Japanese event held in Slovenia, but even though it was a commissioned piece I was given the freedom to paint anything I wanted.

Because there was a Japanese theme, I decided to paint a manga character and also include some elements that represented Japanese culture, such as a katana sword. I also wanted to create a sci-fi environment and combine several different art methods, such as photobashing and 3D modelling.

When I start planning a concept I usually try to include elements that will help viewers to recognise what the painting will be used for, and place these at the focal point, which in this piece is the character and his katana.

I also decided to paint the character in a semi-realistic manga style, in order to give the piece a sense of solidity and make it look more believable. This will nicely balance the fact that the overall idea is straight out of my imagination: a sci-fi warrior combined with traditional Japanese elements.

Picking colours for highlighting

I set my light source at the top right of the image and add brighter, more vivid colours on the character's shoulders, arm and headpiece, so that the character catches the viewer's eye. For shadows I used less vivid colours and colder tones. This tone difference is also visible on the character's face, where I use a soft pink line between lighter areas and shadow sections to achieve a nice contrast between the colder shadows and warmer highlights.



How I create...

A SCI-FI WARRIOR ON THE BATTLEFIELD



1 Making a rough sketch

I usually begin in black and white. I create a rough composition and sketch for the character, using large black surfaces so I can quickly define the pose, the outfit and the composition. I also use 3D elements on the character's torso. I model and render this in ZBrush, then place it on the sketch.



2 Start photobashing

Now I combine my manga painting style with photobashing. I use cropped photos of various motor parts and place them around the character so it looks like he has a mechanical suit and arm. I start detailing the character and add colours using Overlay and Soft Light layer modes.



3 Setting the background

Now that my character is looking more finished, I decide that I need to change the composition slightly. I move the figure to the centre, which will enable the viewer to see more of the environment. I want it to look like he's standing in an abandoned ruined building, so I place various elements around him randomly.

**Painting the portrait**

For the character's face, clothes and hair I use a default Hard Round Pressure Opacity brush and change its Hardness, using 0-40 per cent for softer blending and higher values for detailing. I use a vivid pink line to split the highlights and shadows, then paint the highlights with warm tones and the shadows with colder, pink-purple tones.

**Give the armour a three-dimensional look**

For some of the painting's details I use the Bevel & Emboss option, such as for the damaged parts of the armour on his shoulder and some metal details. I paint damaged parts or metallic parts with flat colour first, then apply the Bevel & Emboss effect for a more realistic 3D look.

**Creating depth**

I make a point of placing different elements in the fore-, mid- and background. To create a sense of depth I place elements (the caution tape and cable) in the foreground, then blur them and make them darker so they don't distract the viewer's eye from the character in the mid-ground. For the background I use less-saturated colours and lighter tones, so the character will be more contrasted and stand out more.

 **RESOURCES****WORKSHOP BRUSHES****PHOTOSHOP****CUSTOM BRUSHES
ROUGH ROUND
BRISTLE**

I use this brush for drawing war-paint on the skin and rough detailing.

SNOWSTORM

This brush enables me to quickly draw snowflakes in the scene.



SketchBook Pro & Photoshop GET READY TO DO THE MONSTER MASH

Cartoonist **Brett Parson** creates a distinctive monster using the drawing strengths of SketchBook Pro and the colouring features of Photoshop

Artist PROFILE

Brett Parson

COUNTRY: US

 Brett, also known as BlitzCadet, is an underground cartoonist from the East coast who likes pizza and beer. He draws monsters, girls and comic books, but not necessarily in that order.
<http://ifxm.ag/bparson>

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

PRO SECRETS

Textures and grimy paper

Adding a layer of paper texture and/or grunge can give a piece a whole new look. There are tons of free downloads online, but I enjoy hunting them down myself. A great place to score old paper is from the back pages of old novels you might find in a charity shop or car boot sale.

Who doesn't love monsters? Especially sleazy, cigar-smoking, beer-guzzling biker monsters! The good folks at ImagineFX have kindly asked me to walk you through my process of creating such a beast.

In this workshop, I'll show you how I sketch up a rough design and add some digital inks on separate layers in SketchBook Pro. This is a drawing program I can't recommend enough!

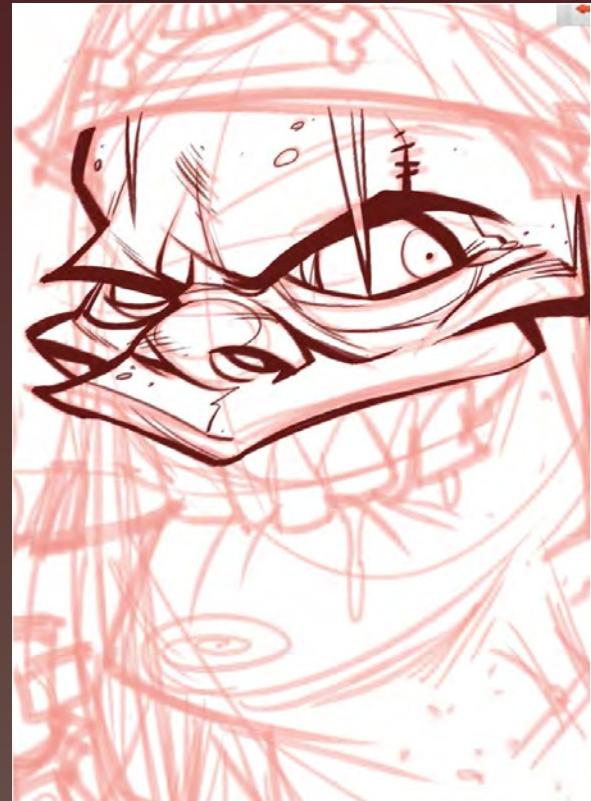
It truly helps bridge the gap between traditional and digital drawing. Then you'll see how I begin colouring an image in Photoshop using different layers and behaviour settings. Then I move on to the digital equivalent of adding traditional cel shading and airbrush shading, highlights and glow effects. You'll also learn a few tricks I tend to use when finishing a piece, such as applying a vignette, colour correction, and adding paper or grunge textures to the final artwork.

It'll help to have a basic knowledge of SketchBook Pro and Photoshop. You'll also want to be fairly comfortable with line drawing, and have a decent sense of light and shadow. However, these steps can be applied to all levels of skill. Whether creating pin-up art and character design or posters and comic book pages, it all comes back to the basic techniques I'm going to share with you. So pull up a stool, crank up the tunes, put on your mad scientist goggles, and let's get crazy!



1 Rough sketching

Using a light pink to draw with (any colour will do) and a modified Pencil tool, I quickly sketch the monster. I don't worry about adding every line and detail yet – this is just my blueprint. Don't be afraid to play and experiment. At this stage nothing is set in stone. You can always go back to make additions and changes or even start over until things are just as you want them.



2 Digital inks

I'm pretty happy with the roughs, so I start cleaning up the line work and adding details. I create a new layer and begin to trace over the rough sketch. I make changes where necessary, and add a little more personality to the lines. By beefing up certain parts of the lines and leaving others alone, I end up with a variety of line weights, making the drawing more interesting.



Workshops



3 Colouring in Photoshop

I choose the Magic Wand with a Tolerance of 22 per cent and select all the negative space in the drawing. I click Selection>Modify>Expand>by two pixels, and then Select>Inverse. Just the character is selected now. I create a new layer under the line work and fill the selection with a solid colour. I then use the Brush tool to colour in the different parts of the character.

Shortcuts
Select on a layer
Ctrl-click (PC)
Cmd-click (Mac)
Click a layer thumbnail in Photoshop to create a selection from the layer content.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

SKETCHBOOK PRO

CUSTOM BRUSHES SUPER-YETI

A fuzzy brush with a nice variety of size with pen pressure. I use this brush when sketching.

5-B BEER-CAN

I use this brush when I want a line that looks dirty and traditional when inking.

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES CLYDE

An opaque brush tool that I use when colouring and adding cel shading.

ROACH-SPRAY

Use as a low-Opacity, pen-sensitive airbrush – ideal for gradient shadows and highlights.



5 Colour correction

All the colours are blocked in but not exactly as I'd like. I duplicate the colours layer so I can make changes without losing what I've done so far. Then I go to Image>Adjustments>Color Balance, Hue/Saturation and Brightness/Contrast, and play with the levels to get tones and hues looking better. I tend to pump up the magentas, yellows and reds to create a vintage colour vibe.



7 Apply airbrush shading

I create another Multiply layer above the previous ones and select the character as in the previous step. Then I take the Airbrush tool, set it to Multiply on a low Opacity of between 10 and 25 per cent, and begin adding gradient shadows. I use a mix of light brown, grey and pink to add different tones and give the shapes more depth.



8 Introduce highlights

I create a Screen layer above the previous layers, select the character, hold down Cmd+Option (Mac) or Ctrl+Alt (PC) and click the Cel Shading layer, selecting everything on the character except the shadows. With a Normal airbrush tool, set on a low Opacity, I add highlights to the points closest to the light source, using the exact colour of the area that I'm adding highlights to.



9 Paint glowing highlights

Now I create a Screen layer above all the others (including the line work). Using the same airbrush from step eight and an orange colour, I add a slight glow to the end of the cigar. I also add a light blue across the bottom of the canvas to create a layer of fog. This sets the character back from the foreground slightly, and gives the scene a sense of three-dimensionality.



10 Make use of a vignette

Next I create a new layer above all the others and set it to Multiply. Then, with an airbrush tool set to Multiply on a low Opacity, I spray a dark brown shadow around the whole canvas. This creates a vignette effect that helps to add more depth and gives the painting more of a photo or portrait feel.



11 Bring in a secondary light source

Now I'll use the cigar as a secondary light source to give the scene even more depth and drama. I add a new layer just below the line art layer and set it to Normal. Then holding Cmd (Mac) or Ctrl (PC) I click the Cel Shading layer. This selects only the shadows on the character. Now I use a small airbrush at low Opacity to add an orange glow to areas reflecting the cigar light.



12 Post colour correction

Now that all the colours are finished, I merge the layers together. Then I select and copy the whole canvas. Now in the History panel, I go back to before I merged all the layers, and paste in the merged version of the artwork as a new layer. This creates a single layer of the artwork in its present state that I can modify without losing what I've done. I then use image adjustment tools to tweak the final colours and tones.



13 Softening the image

Right now all the lines are looking a bit dark, and stand out against the colours more than I want them to. To rectify this I create a new Screen layer above the merged artwork and fill it with a very dark purple. This softens the image, and gets rid of any true black colours. This also helps tie everything together.



14 Drop in a paper texture

As a finishing touch I copy and paste a piece of old paper that I've scanned in on a new Multiply layer above the others. Then I adjust the Brightness/Contrast and layer Opacity until the artwork features just the right amount of paper texture. This helps give the artwork a grittier vibe, and ease that slick computer look that I try to avoid with digital art.

PRO SECRETS

Experiment!

Don't be scared to play and experiment.

Creating different layers and versions as you work can help you discover techniques and colour palettes that you may not have considered otherwise. Working digitally gives you so much freedom, so break out of your comfort zone and get a little weird!

Shortcuts

Eyedropper

Alt-click (PC & Mac)
Use this while colouring in Photoshop to quickly sample existing colours from your drawing.

net

MAGAZINE IPAD EDITION

The iPad edition of **net** has been completely rebuilt from the ground up as a tablet-optimised reading experience.



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Next month in...
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

FILM ART

The latest blockbuster
techniques and inspiring
advice to get you painting!

Featuring...

Terry Whitlatch

The Star Wars creature artist extraordinaire talks about her career and reveals her pearls of wisdom on art.

Concept art tips

Film artist Ben Mauro shares his unmissable tips on creating images for visual development pipelines in film.

George Hull

One of the most prolific and respected concept artists in Hollywood takes us through his movie art.

To boldly go...

How to get started in digital painting with stellar step-by-step advice from Jason Scheier.

ISSUE 122 UK ON SALE FRIDAY 24 APRIL

Photoshop

PAINT A MANGA ENVIRONMENT

Malaysian illustrator **FeiGiap** shows you how to get inspiration from elements around you to paint a nostalgic manga scene



In depth Manga environment



Workshops

Artist PROFILE

FeiGiap

COUNTRY: Malaysia


FeiGiap is co-founder and creative director of Running Snail Studio. He's best known for his detailed and fantasy illustration of Asian cityscapes.
<http://ifxm.ag/feigiap>



See page 6 now!

Before we start any kind of painting we always need an idea or inspiration. Wherever I go, I'm always thinking about whether I can turn the surrounding street or even the whole city into a fantasy scene – a city in the sky, a tower formed of different houses... something very cool.

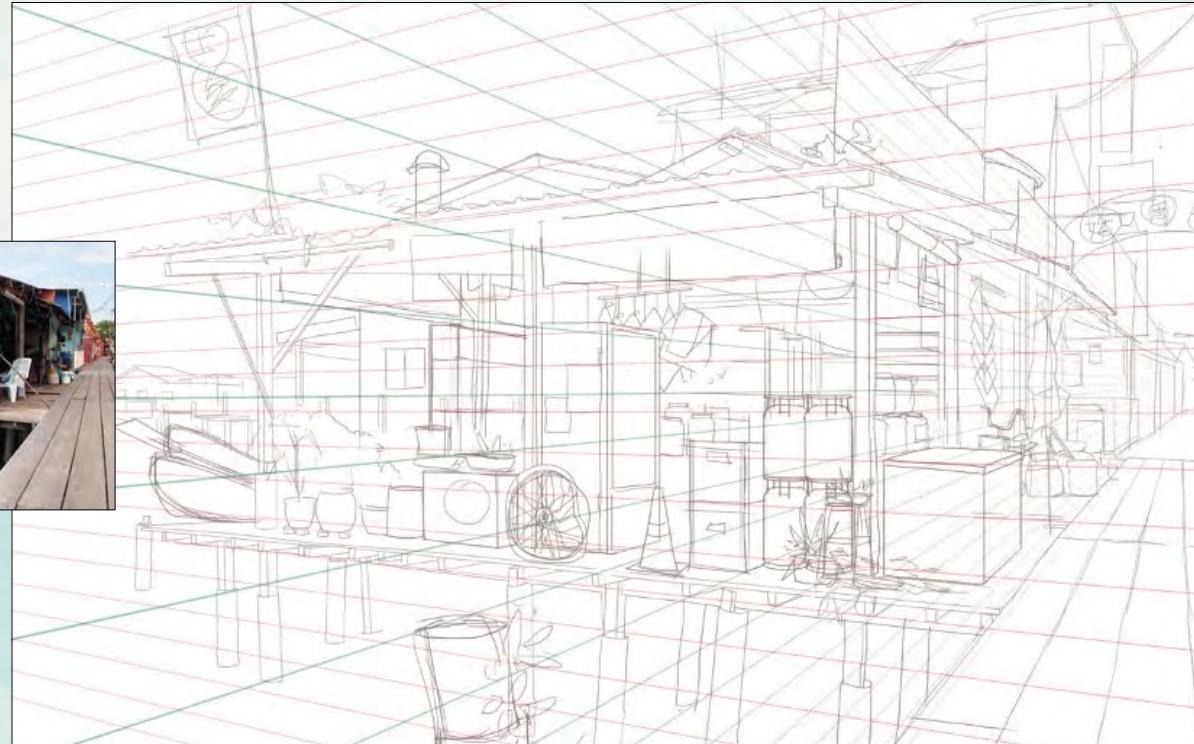
Here I've decided to paint a scene of a seaside stall, based on a photo I took a few years ago at Chew Jetty, Penang, Malaysia. I like the composition and

subject of the photo, but instead of simply copying the photo I'm going to add some imaginative elements. I want to create a scene that has a very nostalgic look and captures the freshness and calmness of the seaside jetty.

Normally before I start painting I'll gather some photo references that have similar subjects to what I'm painting. Although I already have a photo as my starting point, for this painting I'll need more photo references of a little shop and

a jetty and so forth, so that I can have more ideas for the objects and designs that I need to include to make the scene look interesting. I also have some art works for reference and I'll study the way they use colour, the way they paint different objects and so on.

In this workshop, I'll show you my painting steps, from sketch to colour rough and detailing, and explain some of the things you need to be careful about in painting a scene like this.



Shortcuts
Brush
adjustment
F5 (PC & Mac)
Tap the F5 key on your keyboard to open the Brush adjustment panel.

1 The idea and sketch

I start all my art from an initial rough sketch. After that I refine the lines again in a new layer. At this early stage my final line art won't be fine or detailed, because I don't want to limit my options. As long as it's good enough to guide the structure and design, then this will do for now.



2 Light and colour planning

Once I've locked down the composition and design, I render a quick rough to plan the tones and colours. If you do more than one colour rough, you can compare and decide which one works better. The idea of a rough is to quickly get the overall look, so never zoom in and paint details; instead, zoom out to view the entire image and establish the key colours. I never start with a white background, but fill in a dominant colour and paint other colours on top of this base until I'm satisfied with the colour palette.



3 Darken shadow tones

The lighting here is direct sunlight, so light and shadow should be high contrast. So next, I darken the shadows in the focal area – the shop – to give the tone values more contrast. To do this I add a new layer and use Darken mode. I apply a darker tone in the shop interior and use the dark value to define the structure of objects and depth of the shop.



4 Painting detail

When painting an environment it's good practice to separate the image into primary (focal), secondary and background planes, so that the image has a better feeling of depth. I usually start detailing in the focal area, and here that's the shop. So after darkening the shadow on the shop I paint in object detail, enhancing the light surfaces and making some colour changes based on my photo references.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PAINT BRUSH

Most of the time I use this brush to paint. It's in between a round and a square shape, with a slightly soft stroke.

5 Refining edges and structure

The colour rough has been established using only general blocks of colour, so we now need to refine the edges of objects and define structures. To do this I lighten sunlit surfaces to enhance the light and make the wooden structure clearer. At the same time I use bright tones to separate the foreground buildings from the ones in the background.



6 Painting the water surface

Reflection is the key to creating realistic water effects, and the reflections here certainly won't be mirror-like: shapes and angles will be distorted. Objects closest to the surface appear clearer and the tone of the reflection has less contrast. Tones are darkest in the shadows. The surfaces that reflect the sky contain more sky colour and their overall tone will be much brighter.

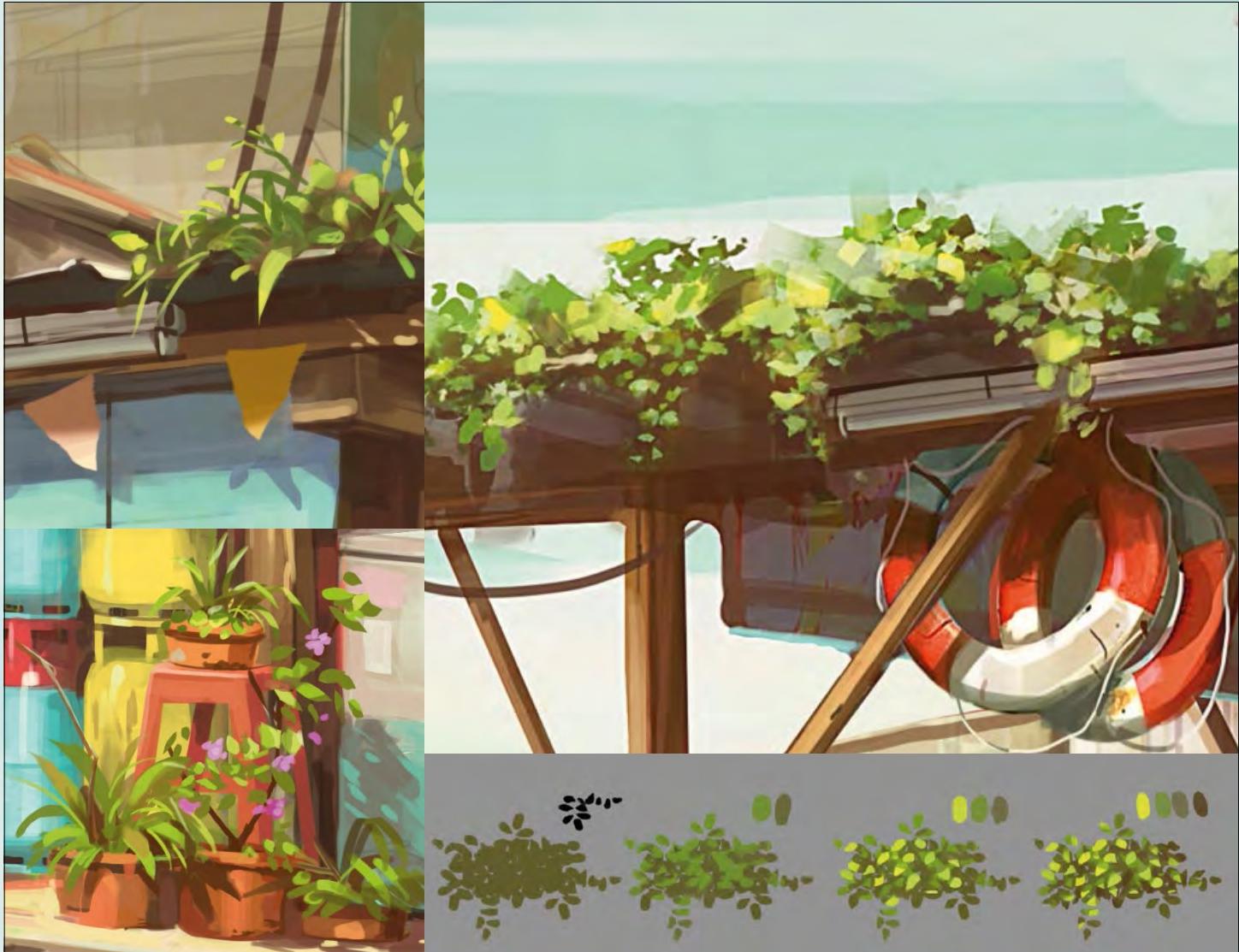
7 Casting shadows

Light and shadow play an important role in bringing out a sense of space and depth. I always like to cast shadows on objects, to give them stronger contrast and bring out their form. Particularly where different objects overlap in the image, adding a shadow (based, of course, on the light source in the image) will help to separate them.

LEAF BRUSH 2

I use this brush to paint light areas on leaves and to help create a sense of depth in the plants.

Workshops



8 Painting plants and leaves

A custom leaf pattern brush is very useful, but for natural-looking plants, light and colour is critical. I always start plants with a silhouette shape, which needs to look random and natural. Next add a light mid-tone based on the light source and plant form. Finally, I apply highlights – here I use a warmer yellowish green to brighten the lighting. Adjust the tones if you need more focus and contrast.

PRO SECRETS

Save your steps

Normally I save up to 10 PSD files in the course of one painting. These backups mean that even if one of my latest files corrupts I won't lose everything. Also, if I need to re-use a layer I had flattened, I can go back to the previous PSD to get it back. You can also see the whole process of the painting, if you need to retrace any steps.



9 Experimentation and decisions

Sometimes when painting you need to make different decisions, and I'll do some fast experiments so I can compare ideas and decide which one I should go for. Here, while painting the sky, I try some different-shaped clouds and only after I've compared them can I choose the most natural or suitable one.



10 Touching-up details

I spend some time touching up the overall detailing. But I don't apply detail to all areas. For areas in shadow, far away from the camera or out of the focal area, I make things slightly more simple with less colour changes. If the focal area doesn't really stand out, I'll add detail and colour to help it do so.



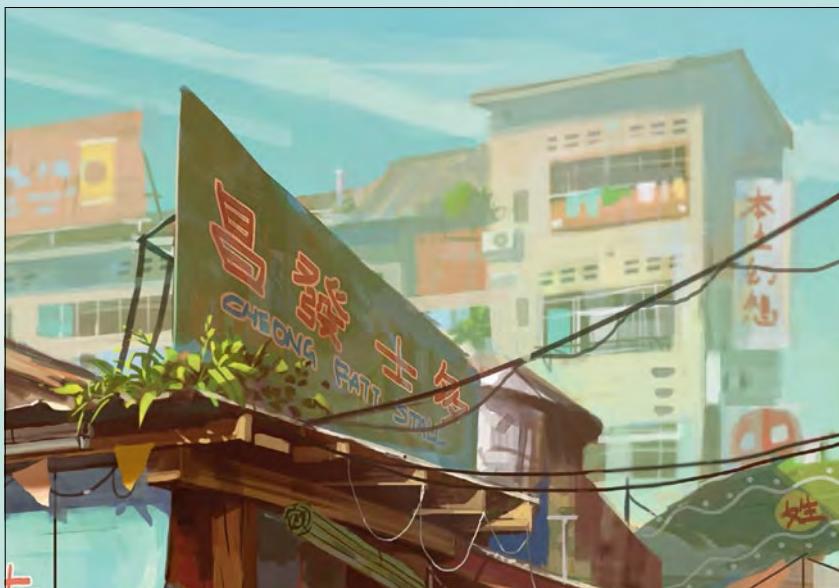
11 Paint figures

I feel my painting needs some characters and animals added to it, to make the painting look more lively and life-like. This time, I use stock manga characters generated from Clip Studio Paint. I just get the pose and angle I want, export the image, then import it into Photoshop and paint over it.



12 Painting distant objects

Now I concentrate on the background and the objects in it. Painting distant objects isn't always easy, even though they need to be relatively simple, with less detail and less contrast. Sometimes I'll add a slight Gaussian blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) to create an impression of depth of field.



13 Adding more objects

At this late stage I'll check the overall composition again. I add in some more branches and bushes at the bottom left, to balance the compositional weight of the image. I touch things up a bit here and there, and add more cables, as well as highlights on the surface of the water.



14 Colour adjustments and final tweaks

Once everything is done and I am happy with the results, I do some final colour adjustments. I'll check how the colours look on different displays, such as an iMac and a PC, then make my adjustments. I tend to use Color Balance for this because you can choose the tonal range you want (shadows, midtones or highlights) and make vibrant colours really pop.

PRO SECRETS

Improve your art works

After finishing a painting, I put some master works with a similar subject side by side with mine. Then I compare the two and check if there's any area I can improve. This is also a good way to identify your weaknesses and improve them.

Shortcuts
Adjust colour
with Color Balance
Ctrl+B (PC)
Cmd+B (Mac)
Target colour tweaks in
shadows, midtones
or highlights.



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Reviews



Artist's Choice Award

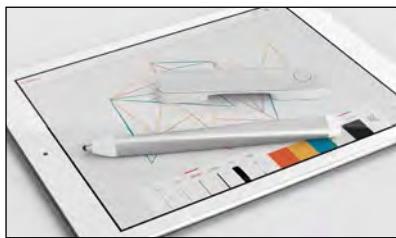
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



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PRODUCTS
ON TEST



SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

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Wacom has built its most beautiful Cintiq yet. But is the new tablet's beauty only skin deep?

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We see if Adobe's first piece of kit for artists matches its software pedigree.



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This app takes lots of photographs and combines them into one, for the best of many worlds.

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A social media app that encourages artists to connect, share and inspire.

93 PG2401PT LED monitor

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The Art of Home; The Art of Big Hero 6; The Art of Total War.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Cintiq 27QHD Touch



DREAM DEVICE Wacom has “listened to creatives” to build its most beautiful Cintiq yet. We find out if its beauty is only skin deep...

Price £1,891 **Company** Wacom **Web** www.wacom.com

With the new 27-inch QHD Cintiq Touch, Wacom’s told us that it learned important lessons from users’ feedback on 2011’s 24HD Cintiq. So has it borne fruit?

The first thing to note on the 27QHD (that’s Quad HD, a step-up from full HD) is its size. It’s a massive 77x47cm, and with a 16:9 aspect ratio compared to the 24’s 16:10, the active screen is a touch wider. Thanks to a stunning edge-to-edge glass design, however, the 27’s total width is the same as the 24. Despite this, the 27QHD Touch is actually cheaper than the 24HD Touch (£1,891 compared to £2,182). So Wacom clearly wants the 27 to replace the 24 as its standard Cintiq.

The borders have been reduced around the active screen, which are now magnetised strips to place your slinky new remote on. And the ever-so-slightly etched glass surface produces a nice ‘bite’ for the stylus, in addition to reduced glare.

The grip pen is pretty similar to the 24’s, but the new ExpressKey Remote

is a great replacement to the old screen’s border buttons. Now that there are no active areas on the screen borders, there should be less interruption to your work by accidentally resting your elbow on the edges of the device.

Another improvement is the 2,560x1,440 pixels resolution, and you

wheel, is a great addition and with Wacom’s cloud service you can back up your personal settings.

The Touch side of things proves to be a disappointment. When we played with it in Photoshop, the two-finger pan was fine, but the two-finger zoom and rotate had issues: it wasn’t as responsive as we’d hoped, with the

“The ever-so-slightly etched glass surface produces a nice ‘bite’ for the stylus, in addition to reduced glare”

can really see the difference. Brightness was perfect as soon as the 27 was turned on. The colours, we are assured, also come correct right out of the box, so there’s no need for a lengthy calibration process.

There are five USB ports, comprising four USB 3.0 ports and an additional USB for the ExpressKey Remote dongle, and a HDMI input. The remote, which offers 17 customisable buttons, including the

rotate actually moving the canvas off screen. Furthermore, you can’t use these touch functions when using your pen, although you can make changes if you use the pen with the remote. This could be a problem caused by either Adobe or the Cintiq drivers, so we imagine it’ll be fixed by an update soon.

Overall, however, this is a beautifully designed and extremely powerful device that justifies the high asking price. In short, it’s the best Cintiq yet.

DETAILS

Features

- 27-inch screen
- 16:9 aspect ratio
- 2,560x1,440 resolution
- 2,048 levels of pen pressure, tilt and multi-touch
- ExpressKey Remote time-saving settings
- 1.07 billion displayable colours (requires DisplayPort connection and video card supporting 10-bit colour)
- 97 per cent Adobe RGB colour gamut
- 40 degree tilt range

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7, 8
Mac: OS X 10.5.8+

Rating



Hydra

iOS

SHOOT BRIGHT Get the best of many worlds with this neat photo app.

Price £3.99

Company Creaceed

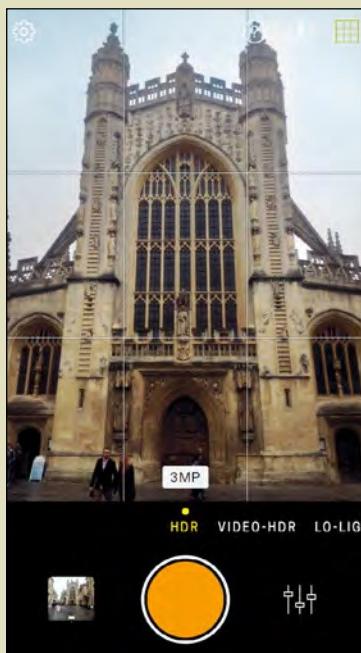
Web www.creaceed.com

RATING

Hydra makes use of the latest software rendering technologies now available to iOS devices. Its main function is taking high-dynamic range (HDR) shots. HDR is when the camera takes multiple shots of a scene at different exposure settings and merges them into a single picture.

Hydra performs this function admirably, combining up to 20 exposures in a single output image whose levels can then be tweaked, making it ideal for snapping inspirational scenes on the go. There's also a video-HDR mode which, although good, isn't as impressive as static shots, while the low-light mode removes camera noise well, but can't work miracles.

Hydra's high-resolution and zoom modes employ a subtle motion technique to recreate high-resolution images from a number of low-res ones, but we couldn't always tell the difference. Ultimately though, Hydra's HDR mode won us over. It really does make for taking great pictures, even in poor light.



Hydra takes many images and combines them, for a more balanced light in contrasted scenes.



The build quality of the Ink (the stylus) and Slide is second to none and it feels great to use.

Ink & Slide

iPad ONLY

SLIDE RULES Will Adobe's first piece of hardware be as essential for digital artists as its creative software?

Price £160 **Company** Adobe **Web** www.adobe.com

Adobe's Ink & Slide offers both a state-of-the-art stylus, and a 21st century take on the good-old straight edge. Designed to work with Adobe apps such as Illustrator Draw and Photoshop Sketch running on an iPad, the latter isn't just any old ruler - it can act as a smart input device for an app's shape-drawing tools.

As well as drawing straight lines you can also use it as a French curve or shape template by cycling through the various options available in your chosen app by clicking the button on the top of the Slide component. Although it's a great way to feel as though you're getting more hands-on with your drawing, in use it's rather gimmicky. If you get too close to the edge of the iPad's screen you can either lose connectivity or leave unwanted marks. Furthermore, the line tools function with or without the Slide, which only works with Adobe apps. This will be frustrating if you prefer drawing in Procreate or iDraw.

Of the two bits of kit, the Ink stylus is by far the most useful. It feels great in your hand, with your fingers sitting nicely along the angles. The device makes use of Adonit's PixelPoint



You can colour code the tip of the Ink via the setup menu.

technology, which makes available 2,048 levels of pressure. This means you can generate fine or graduated marks with ease. Furthermore, the tip is like a biro (rather than the spongy tips of some older styluses), which boosts general accuracy. Unfortunately, it only has one input button on the side that's designed to work as a menu function in the Adobe apps, unlike its main rivals that have two.

At £160 the Ink & Slide isn't cheap, and the novelty of the Slide doesn't justify the extra cost. Especially so, when you consider styluses such as Adonit's Jot Touch or Wacom's Creative Stylus that offer similar functionality to the Ink for nearly half the price.

DETAILS

Features

- Ink has 2,048 levels of pressure
- Comes with micro-USB charger and cylindrical carry case
- Compatible with Illustrator Line and Draw, and Photoshop Sketch
- Both Ink and Slide have input buttons for in-app shortcut menu and navigating shape tools
- Ink uses Adonit PixelPoint technology

System Requirements

iOS: Works with iPad (fourth generation), iPad Minis and iPad Air

Rating





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ArtStack

SOCIAL ART A social media app geared around art and artists

Price Free

Company ArtStack

Web www.theartstack.com

RATING 

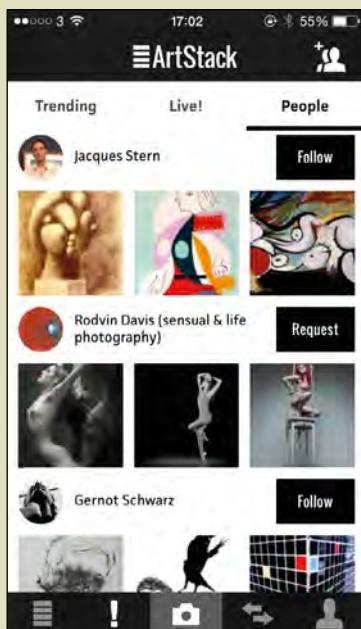
ArtStack pitches itself as an art discovery tool with a social side. Essentially, you can search out art that inspires you and add it to your personal art 'stack': an Instagram-like feed of collected favourite artworks that can be shared with other members of ArtStack.

You can follow other 'stackers' and artists (including gallery owners and curators) and create collections of your own by using the search bar in the main Explore section, where you can also see what's trending.

We searched for Brian Froud, created our own stack of his work and were then able to link up with members who are also interested in his work. You can also discover exhibitions and follow artists whose work is being exhibited.

The interface takes some getting used to. We found the website easier to navigate initially and a better introduction to the burgeoning world of ArtStack.

However, sharing your own art is straightforward and the app is available for iOS and Android devices. ArtStack is absolutely worthwhile, especially as it's free.



Following an artist's work means you keep on top of new additions and find similar artists.



BenQ's nattily named PG2401PT is clearly aimed at pro artists, and colour fidelity is accordingly excellent.

PG2401PT LED monitor

GO PRO BenQ's latest monitor is one of the loveliest we've seen, but is it worth its epic asking price?

MAC & PC

Price £810 **Company** BenQ **Web** www.benq.com

From the moment you open the box it's clear BenQ's PG2401PT monitor is firmly aimed at pros. Within you'll find a complete calibration report – someone back at the factory has checked that it's been set up to within an inch of its life. If that's not enough, BenQ has even included a hood to keep pesky light and reflections away from whatever artwork you're working on.

The resolution maxes out at 1,920x1,200 pixels, which is slightly above the previous crop of HD monitors, but not up there with the extremes of 4K and Ultra HD screens. At this 24-inch size it's arguable that super-high resolutions aren't needed, and they certainly feel more suited to bigger screens with bigger pixels. The problem is that even though it's a smidgen above the conventional HD resolution of 1,920x1,080 pixels, Windows still can't quite get its head around it, so you occasionally face a giant cursor and tiny text.

Fortunately, art programs handle the resolutions with more deftness. Photoshop – which is in its element on such a nice monitor – works especially well, as does Painter. BenQ has collaborated with Pantone owner X-Rite to ensure that everything is configured correctly, and that the colours you see on screen will faithfully match what you print. Colour Pickers have never looked more vibrant, and they're rounded off with plenty of contrast, even on the inkiest of blacks.

The only negative here is the price, which at over £800 is pretty high, even considering its professional qualifications. By way of comparison, Dell's UltraSharp U2412M 24-incher will set you back just £200, while delivering a decent colour range and the same resolution.

If you're working in printed media, where accurate colours are crucial, then you have a strong case to justify a purchase. But if you're just doodling for the web then it's a hell of a pay out for very little extra visual control.

DETAILS

Features

- Five-year warranty, with zero pixel defect six-month guarantee
- Monitor hood
- Individual factory-tested colour calibration report
- Ten-bit display panel for smooth shading and colour transitions in natural gradations
- 14-bit 3D look-up-table and processing
- D-Sub, DVI-D, HDMI, DisplayPort, Mini Display Port inputs
- Picture-in-picture modes
- Integrated USB ports and SD reader
- 1,920x1,200 resolution
- Palette Master software

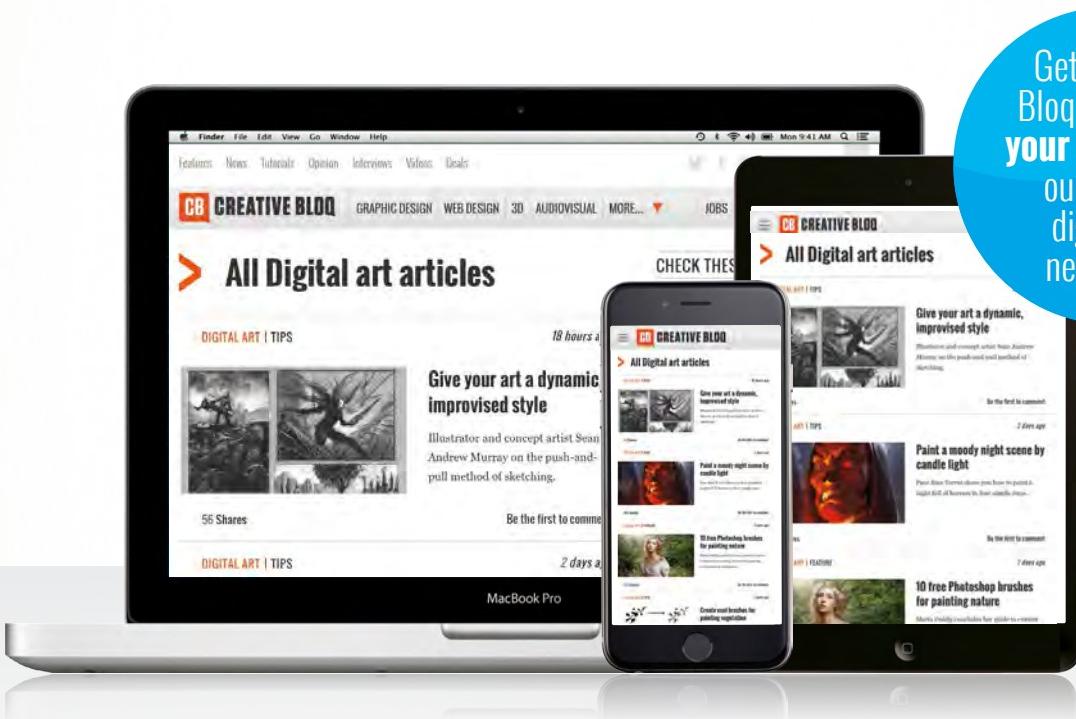
System Requirements

PC & Mac: D-Sub, DVI-D, HDMI, DisplayPort or Mini Display Port output

Rating



The number one destination for **digital art** news, views and how-tos.



CB CREATIVE BLOQ

Graphic design

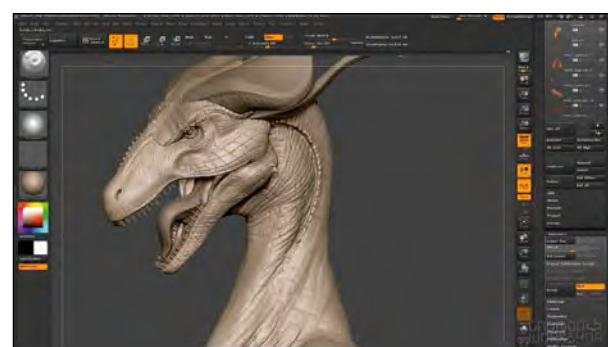
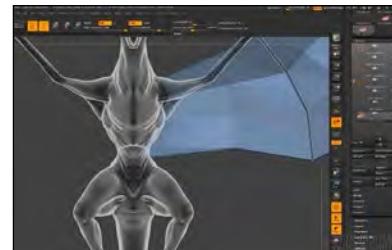
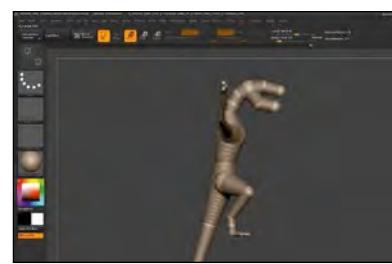
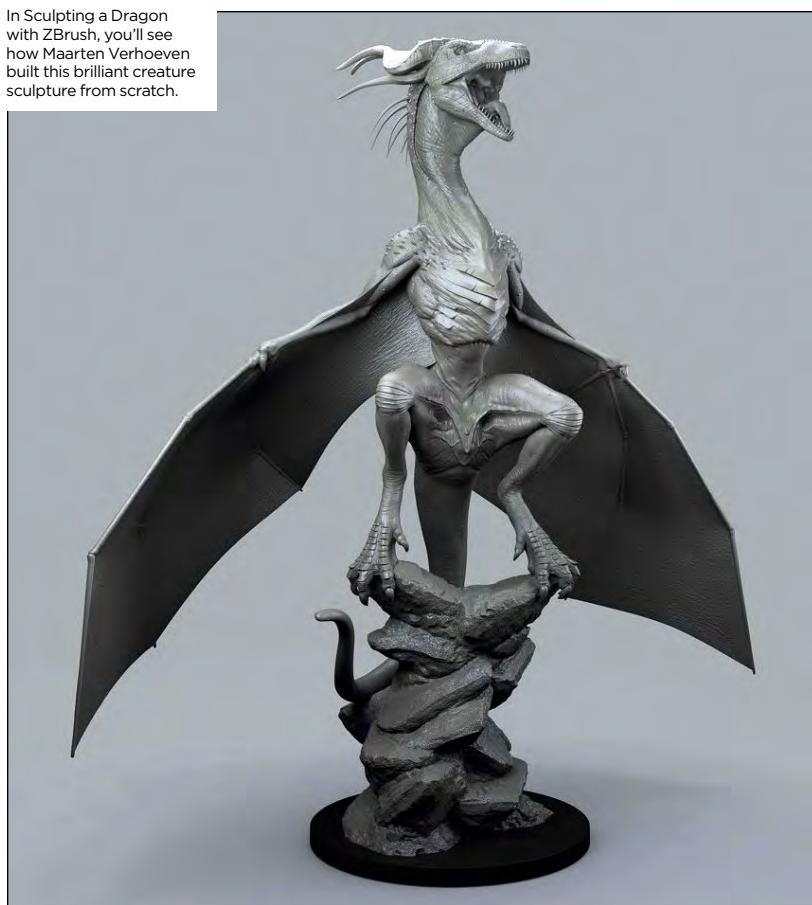
Web design

3D

Digital art

www.creativebloq.com

In Sculpting a Dragon with ZBrush, you'll see how Maarten Verhoeven built this brilliant creature sculpture from scratch.



ZSpheres provide one of the simplest ways to construct your core form, so you can focus on details sooner.

Expect to spend a lot of your time adding scales to your dragon. Maarten's got tips to make the job easy.

Sculpting a Dragon with ZBrush

READY FOR TAKE-OFF Digital sculptor Maarten Verhoeven shares the skills he uses when working on effects for blockbuster movies

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$59 **Format** Download only **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

The appeal of dragons to our imaginations has endured for centuries. They're a topic that every fantasy artist takes a crack at during their career, so Maarten Verhoeven has picked a great subject for his exhaustive sculpting workshop. He uses ZBrush throughout most of this video's four-hour span, with just a brief look at the rendering tool KeyShot at the end.

Maarten kicks off proceedings by using ZSpheres to construct his reptilian figure. It's far from the only way you can get a sculpture started in ZBrush, but it's one of the most accessible methods when the form has some complexity. This first chapter establishes the tone of the whole tutorial: in quiet tones, Maarten explains clearly what he's doing, with plenty of tips and shortcuts. It's also evident, though, that the audio recording is a little over-compressed, resulting in a slightly tinny ambience.



DETAILS

- Topics covered**
- Blocking out with ZSpheres
- Using SubTools
- Sculpting techniques
- Posing with Transpose Master
- Creating scales
- Retopologising
- Adding fine detail
- Rendering with KeyShot

Length

233 minutes

Rating



As Maarten progresses, you'll see how you can tackle a full-figure subject without feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the challenge. And as the forms take shape and the surface details pile up, you'll also learn a lot about posing your figures and a couple of different ways of applying the scales that do so much to define the dragon.

Yet as helpful and comprehensive as Maarten's workshop is, you can't help feeling that something's missing, too. The best training videos do more than present the process and tools: they provide a window into the artist's world, offering a context of how the expectations of the target audience or client informs their design and technical decisions. With little of this insight offered, this video perhaps fails to fully take off compared with some. However, you can still expect to pick plenty of new skills, especially if you're new to ZBrush and feel a little daunted by the breadth of its toolset.

ARTIST PROFILE MAARTEN VERHOEVEN

Maarten is a digital sculptor and VFX artist specialising in work for film, commercials and toys. Born and raised in Belgium, Maarten developed a great interest for anatomy, art and history. He gained a master's degree in animation and worked as an all-round VFX artist before going freelance to follow his passion: digital sculpting. Today Maarten contributes to various companies and projects including Pixologic, Hasbro, The Avengers, GI Joe, Iron Man, The Gentle Giant, The Walking Dead and The Hobbit.



www.verhoevenmaarten.blogspot.be

HAPPY HUMANSTOWN

WHEN THE BOOV COLONIZE EARTH, they decide to move all the planet's original inhabitants to a homogenous reserve in Australia, which they call "Happy Humanstown." In this artificial town, colonists are forced to follow strict rules and enjoy the comforts of the Boov's food, music, and ice cream—despite the size of average human houses—because as Oh says to Tip in the movie, "You looked shorter from space."

"The Boov are well-meaning but arrogant overlords," says producer Chris Jenkins. "They think they're taking care of us, but the houses are too small, the TVs are too big, and our only source of nourishment is sweet, sugary, processed food. We have to eat it, ice cream."

The real-world inspiration for Happy Humanstown came from Celebration, the census-designated, master-planned community in Osceola County, Florida, as well as nearby designed California suburbs. "When you drive around California, you come across these communities that are very pink and proper," says Jenkins. "Not one of them is the same, but they all have beautiful gardens and have the same feel. Our job was to scale them down and to make them both quaint and livable—and obviously, they had to look ridiculous, because the Boov were behind them."

He continues, "The idea was to portray a sense of irony, where even though the Boov think they're doing us a favor and have studied all our 'needs,' in truth they have a very superficial understanding of what makes us happy."



CONCECOOC



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The Art of Home

DON'T PANIC! The brand new interstellar adventure from DreamWorks has inspired a worthy explosion of colour and shape

Author Ramin Zahed **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Tip is a typical kid on a typical planet which is taken over lock, stock and barrel by a frankly stupid race of greedy aliens, the Boov. This triggers a chase across alien-occupied America in DreamWorks' latest CG caper, hitting UK cinemas this spring. However, the Boov turn out to be cuddly compared to their own feared enemies, the Gorg, and both film and book set great store by the essential defining shapes of the three species: the spherically minded Boov, spiky Gorg and square Earthlings, who live their lives in right-angled boxes.

Home is based on Alex Rex's best-selling children's book The True Meaning of Smekday, a hit heavily influenced by The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. But if this film tie-in has one main flaw, it's the lack of attention given to the source material. Rex pops up at the very end to insist that seeing



Sketches of Home's protagonists: Tip (voice acted by pop star Rihanna) and the Boov alien, Oh (The Big Bang Theory's Jim Parsons).

his story turned into glossy CG was a pleasure, but if you want to get any kind of idea of how his original illustrations inspired the film, you'll have to either head to your local bookstore or hit Google Images.

That aside, Titan has assembled a suitably bright and enjoyable package to accompany Home's release, with lusciously reproduced scenes throughout, insightful thoughts from a whole host of talented folk from the numerous production departments, and even fold-over pages echoing the shape of each species. Author Ramin Zahed's stroll through the different areas of creativity that went into the film gives the idea of a complete love-in from start to finish, and certainly leaves the uninitiated keen to go and see Home for themselves.

There could perhaps have been more about how the performances from the likes of Steve Martin and Rihanna influenced the animation. But



Slushious is made with bits of an ice slushy machine and was part-inspired by Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

then again the book's main focus is the art of the film, and on that score it offers an eye-pleasing balance of rough designs and lavish renders.

Despite a fair few interstellar smash hits dotted through its 30-plus CG cartoon releases over the years, DreamWorks films do have a tendency to end up in the bargain bin, while Disney's and Pixar's offerings zoom up the box office charts. If Home turns out to be one of the hits, as it deserves, then this will be a worthy memento of a joyful project. If it proves to be more of an Over The Hedge than a Shrek, then this attractive book will end up as just a lovingly created curio.

RATING



The Art of Big Hero 6

NO MARVEL The Disney machine's first fully digested Marvel property wowed the multiplex audiences – but how does it fare on the page?

Author Jessica Julius **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.chroniclebooks.com **Available** Now

Big Hero 6 is the first truly Disney-style release to come from 2009's buy-up of Marvel, and the company was certainly savvy to choose an obscure, Japanese-influenced franchise, for which only the tiniest minority of fans really cared about.

The cartoon takes some huge liberties with the material (particularly the complete reinvention of monster robot Baymax as a toy-friendly inflatable), but a poll of cinema



Yama means "mountain of a man": the bad guys' head honcho certainly lives up to his name.



attendees would suggest the Disney magic has worked wonders with a comic so unloved even its creators tend to stress they came up with the idea during a busy period.

All of which makes Chronicle's book tie-in such a disappointment. The text glances over the history of the franchise, diving right in with a sparsely written 'making of'. Environments and characters are covered, with the city of San Fransokyo – executive producer

and Pixar CEO Jon Lasseter's neat idea of combining Tokyo and San Francisco – in particular getting plenty of page coverage. But the book's design is a let down. One sprat thrown towards the Marvel ethos is the use of comic-book-style text boxes to present bite-sized chunks of information, but the pages slip by uninspiringly, and even the cover is ugly. A missed opportunity.

RATING

The Art of Total War

WAR IS HELL The beloved and screamingly violent game franchises are celebrated in print, and it's not a pretty picture

Author Martin Robinson **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

When Total War: Attila was released in February, it became the ninth entry in a brutal strategy video game series that's spanned the century so far in release terms, and spanned millennia in its battle-packed gameplay. This print celebration of the franchise's history provides a brilliantly comprehensive guide to how Total War has grown and developed, with input from all the creative minds who've worked on it to date.



The Crusades were among several wars that featured in Medieval II: Total War.



On the other hand, it's a good job that it's worth reading, because Titan has published a mind-numbingly drab book from a design viewpoint. While the game's graphics take leaps forward, their visual elements are displayed here in a simplistic manner that screams '1998' on every spread. Admittedly, the true-history concept of the series makes it intrinsically less creative than the likes of Assassin's Creed, but it isn't an aesthetic feast.

Divorced from the actual gameplay, no generation of Total War really takes the eye by storm with its artwork, and vague echoes of Victorian Romanticist portraiture are the closest the basic style gets to standalone artistic value.

True fans of the series may well be fascinated by the game franchise's evolution. But art lovers are best warned off a purchase.

RATING

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DISCOVER HOW TO PENCIL & INK AN ASSASSIN

Andy Brase depicts a deadly version of Ezio, Assassin's Creed II's iconic killer **Page 106**

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David Palumbo's studio set-up.



114 First impressions
Terese Nielsen talks bodies.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Iris Compiet

LOCATION: Netherlands

WEB: www.eyeris.eu

EMAIL: info@eyeris.eu

MEDIA: Graphite pencil, watercolour, gouache, ink



Iris sees herself as a visual storyteller. She works as a freelance illustrator, designing characters and creating artwork for films and animations, and illustrating book covers and stories for clients worldwide. She's also working on her own children's books about "weird witches and not-so-scary monsters".

Iris likes the weird, the wonderful, the grim, the whimsical and the mysterious. "I like to make people look again. I like them to use their imagination," she says. "I see stories everywhere. I hear them in a whisper. I see them in a leaf or a puff of smoke. Anything is possible. To me, art is being absolutely free, having no boundaries but your own imagination. My sketchbooks are filled with stories to tell for at least two lifetimes."

1 BLACK WIDOW, LATRODECTUS

Graphite pencil, gouache and gold ink, 23x23in

"This character is mourning the death of her husband, who recently passed away. She loved him so very much. Yet people were starting to spread nasty rumours about her, implying she was a monster."

2 MISFORTUNETELLER

Graphite pencil, red chalk, terracotta pencil and gold acrylic paint, 12x24in

"This started as a sketch of a skeleton with three eye sockets, based upon a skull at the Mutter Museum. This idea popped in my mind: what if you could have your misfortune told, instead of your fortune? Wouldn't that be more interesting, because if you know your misfortune everything else is 'fortune'?"

3 ORACLE

Graphite pencil, 12x24in

"This came about when I took some reference shots of myself. One looked weird because it had completely white eyes. I took things from there and suddenly fish appeared, demons, skulls and other little details. You keep seeing new elements. Like an oracle, she will show you what you want to see."

4 MARIE ANTOINETTE

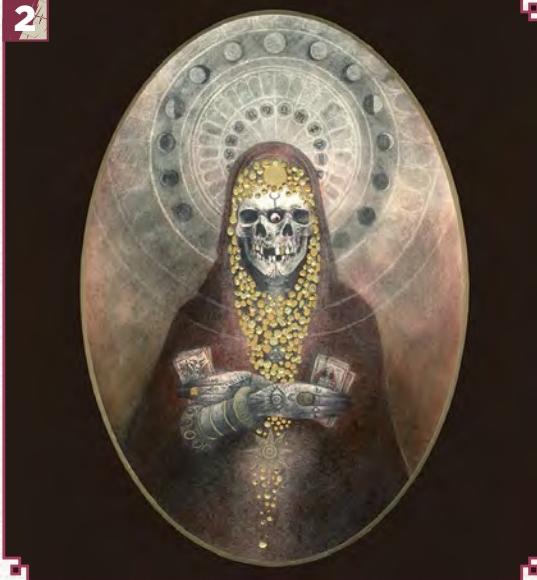
Graphite pencil and gouache washes, 9.5x15in

"I have a fascination with tentacles and the kraken, and I like to play with things. That's how Marie came to be. The hairdos were crazy at the French court: birdcages with live birds or complete flower arrangements were 'normal' – even miniature ships. So I managed to combine the kraken with a little history."

1



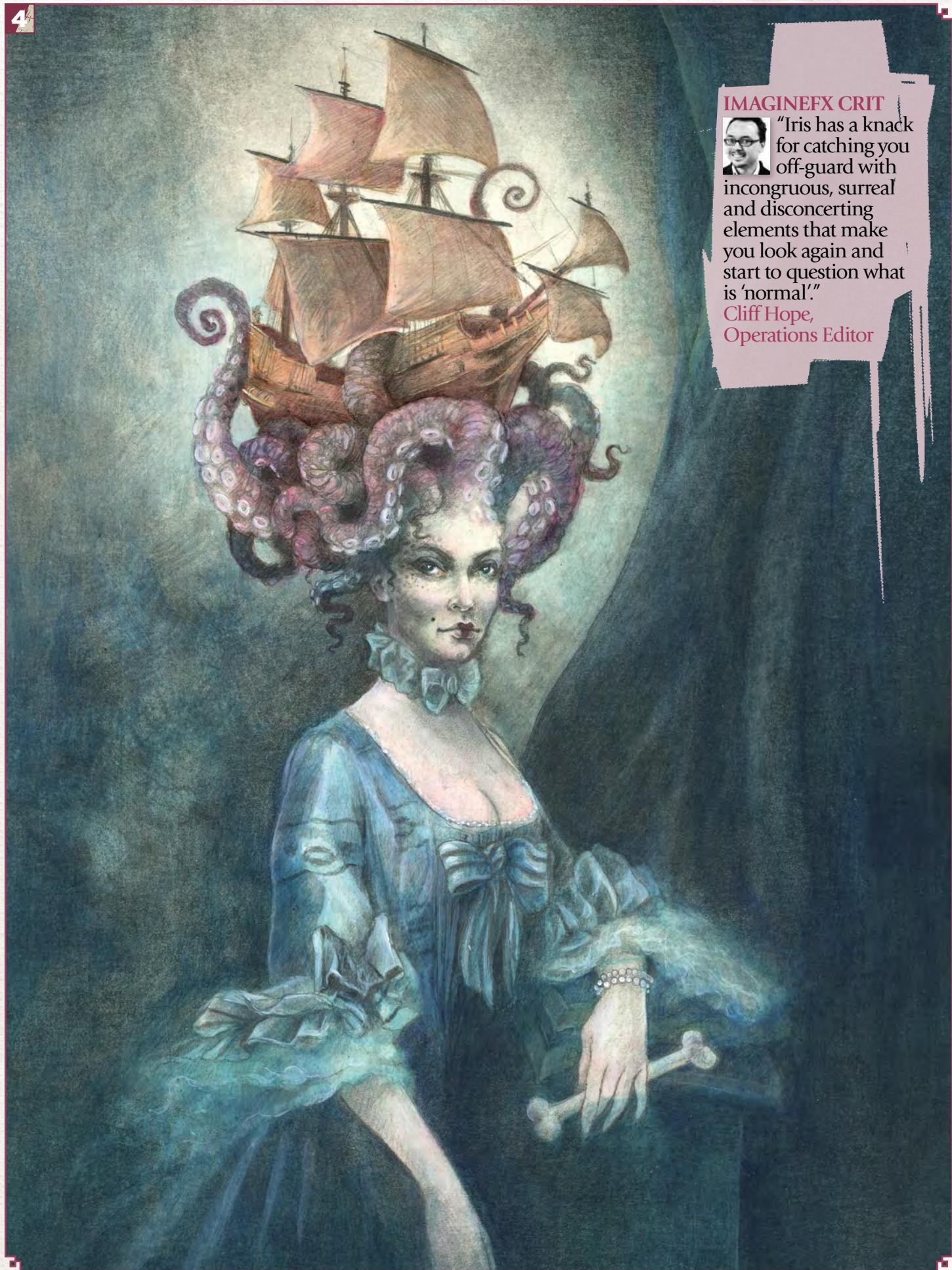
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3



4+



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Iris has a knack for catching you off-guard with incongruous, surreal and disconcerting elements that make you look again and start to question what is 'normal'."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

Tracy E Flynn

LOCATION: US
WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/teflynn>
EMAIL: tracyflynnart@gmail.com
MEDIA: Oils on Masonite



Tracy works solely in traditional forms. "There's a magic to the pieces when the light hits them and the colours start to glow." He's passionate about working with oil paints, and brush and inks, and would love to break into the publishing and gaming worlds. At the moment he's busy illustrating for various novels and an up-and-coming RPG, Endless Terrors.

1 DROW VS FLAYER

Oils on Masonite, 14x18in

"I painted this piece for one of Jon Schindehette's ArtOrder challenges. The image was supposed to be for a wrap-around cover, and if I remember my research correctly, when a Mind Flayer dies he turns into a vaporous green version of himself. I wanted to depict that and give an added sense of danger and interest to the image."



2 CAVERN OF DOOM

Oils on Masonite, 14x18in

"I painted this primarily left-handed after surgery on my right hand. I'm a 'sketchaholic' and am constantly doodling and drawing things, and for this one I was on a dwarf kick and had been playing about with different images of dwarfs. I had also done a pencil image of a seeker that I really liked, so I combined dwarfs, caverns and the seeker into a Dungeons & Dragons style image."



3 ÉOWYN

Oils on Masonite, 16x20in

"Every fantasy artist has to do a Tolkien piece. Éowyn's encounter with the Witch King has amazing drama. You have this undead king who can't be killed by any man, and his ego gets the best of him by assuming that his foe is a man, and all of a sudden you have the revelation of, 'I am not a man!' It's an incredible climax to the scene."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO EXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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(maximum 1MB per image)

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IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Tracy brings different fantasy worlds to vibrant life. His images are full of carefully rendered details hinting at rich backstories, which you're left itching to learn more about."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

Creative Space



HEY YOU!
Are you a part of
a regular art class or
group? Email us at
mail@imaginefx.com
if you want to
feature here!

MATTHEWS COMIC AND MANGA MEETUP

MARK JASON HASSLER's Saturday art classes in Matthews, North Carolina, are helping kids express themselves through a mutual love of comic books

Seeing a lack of classes teaching traditional art basics, comic books skills and manga illustration in Matthews, North Carolina, Mark Jason Hassler took the simple but deceptively bold step of setting one up himself.

His comic-gearied classes attract a young audience and have become something of a social club for youths to meet other art-minded children. "Being really into anime and manga keeps them on the outside edges, socially, at school," says Mark.

The class gives these young artists a comfortable, supportive environment to develop their skills and Mark encourages them to feel at ease with inclusive

communal drawing and a democratic way of teaching. "Most of my students are somewhat shy," says Mark. "The classes are grouped by age, each group decides on a character, and then we all draw the character together."

He also breaks down complex art theory, such as perspective and anatomy, into bite-size steps. "When a student has said something like, 'I can't ever get so and so's eyes right,' I'll go get an image of that character and we'll draw it together."

His hands-on teaching encourages his students' love of comics and offers support they don't get at school. Indeed, Mark says that, "Most art teachers at schools and such look down their noses at comics, manga, sci-fi and fantasy art."



The children are encouraged to create their own comic characters, aided by Mark's hands-on guidance.

Mark takes on the role of big brother, sharing his own inspirations. "One of my students wants to draw comic books someday and I've pointed him to several artists and resources that resonated with me when I was young," Mark says. "His mum got him a Marvel Comics book that I'd had growing up, which he'll often bring to class and sometimes I draw examples right out of the book with him and the other students."



Mark's How to Draw Well art classes are split into four two-hour sessions for various age groups and run every Saturday at The McDowell Arts Center, Matthews, North Carolina. You can find out more at <http://ifxm.ag/mattclass>.

Creative Space Matthews Meetup



Mark demonstrates art theory to his class, encouraging the students to draw along with him.



Nicholas and Jahred show off their art. The young artists bond over a mutual love of art, manga and comic books.



The classes teach students essential art skills and how to apply them to their favourite comic book-style illustrations.

BRIGHT FUTURE

There's plenty of comic-art promise in North Carolina



Mark will often create a comic character and encourage the young artists to create their own versions.



Some sessions set challenges for the students, like creating their own swamp monster.



John painted this not entirely friendly-looking chap (left).



Jenna's character is covered in scars. "He's been through a lot, but is still kind of cocky!"



Workshops



 **GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Pencil Pen Ink

PENCIL AND INK A GAME CHARACTER

Dive into the intricate and brooding shadows, as **ANDY BRASE** uses line and ink to depict a deadly version of Ezio, the iconic killer from Assassin's Creed II

What's better than getting a chance to draw some of the iconic characters from Assassin's Creed? Being asked to make them darker and portray them as villains!

Those familiar with my art probably won't be surprised to know that I gravitate toward the shadowy and more mysterious characters. This often happens to be villains, anti-heroes and monsters. The Assassin's Creed characters are already quite dark, so this assignment was right up my alley.

Ezio, from the Italian Renaissance time period, was one of the assassins I was most drawn to at first. To show this character as a villain, I want to do it in a fairly realistic way using mood, shadow and the atmosphere of the drawing. I don't want to make him overly demonic or bring in elements that might be totally out of place in the Assassin's Creed world. I've always liked drawing statues and think it'll fit well with this image to bring

ARTIST INSIGHT

TEST RUN

Test your pens on a separate practice sheet before inking, to make sure the ink is flowing properly when you work on the drawing.

in some elements that will build up a gothic atmosphere.

The focus of this workshop is on the inking and line work of my Dark Ezio drawing. This piece is made to be presented in black and white ink, so I'll be approaching the artwork in a way so that colour won't be needed. Having a lot of contrast and spot black shadows generally works well with drawings that will be in black-and-white. It gives more weight to the drawing if there are some heavy blacks present.

I'm often asked what tools I use to ink my art. Most of my detailed works are done with Sakura Micron Pens. Long ago, when I started inking, I used Rapidograph technical pens, but they started leaking and required a lot of cleaning, so I switched. Microns don't require any cleaning up afterwards and they also have more of a flexible tip than some technical pens. If you're new to inking it's always good to try out some different tools and see what works best for you. Many comic artists and other inkers prefer to use a



brush and ink to achieve a different line style and more thick-to-thin lines.

For me, Microns tend to be what I use most often. The following pages will give you a better look into my ink work. Now on to drawing an assassin!



Andy is best known for his dark character, creature and cover illustrations. Titles he's worked on include DarkSun, Kull, Daredevil, Swamp Thing, Assassin's Creed, book covers for George RR Martin, and his own artbook/sketchbook titled Exorcism.

www.facebook.com/andybraseart

In depth Pencil and ink



MATERIALS

PENCIL

- Pencil
- Mechanical pencil
- HB lead
- Lead holder pencil

PEN

- Sakura Micron Pens
- Sizes 005, 01, 05 and brush pen

INK

- Winsor & Newton
- White Ink (Opaque)

MISCELLANEOUS

- Design ArtGum
- Eraser/Cleaner
- Strathmore Bristol 400 series, smooth surface
- Kneaded eraser

INKING TIP

DEVELOP YOUR STYLE
Don't be too concerned about your style of inking. Style will build naturally when you're creating your art.



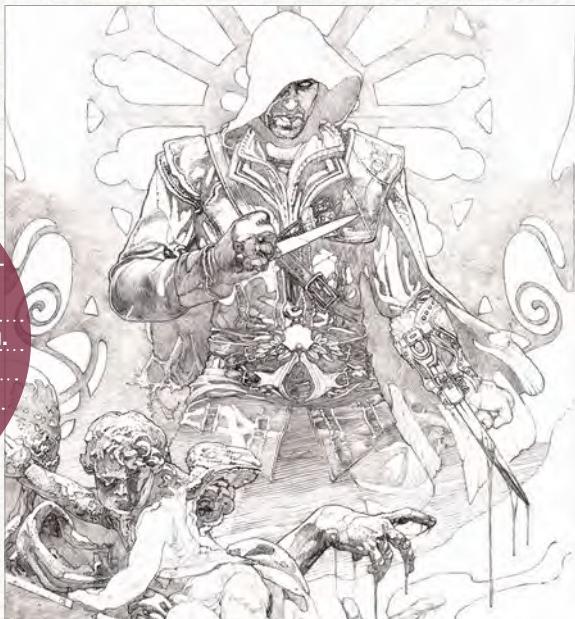
1 Rough sketch

I start with a rough sketch to figure out the main shapes of the composition. Sometimes I do smaller thumbnails, but in this case I jump into a sketch at the same size that I'll be drawing the final. I add a couple of bloody hands near the bottom after I've done the initial rough.



2 Transferring and pencilling

When I have the basic composition figured out and approved, I transfer this sketch with a lightbox to my Bristol board for the final drawing. Then I start pencilling in the bigger shapes, using a mechanical pencil and HB lead. Once I'm happy with this, I focus on adding more details.



3 Pencil finish

In the tighter pencil stage I make sure to figure out all the important anatomy and composition issues. I correct any major problems with the drawing that were present in the rough version. Having a pencil drawing with a strong structure will help me to focus on the inking process.



4 Starting to ink

Next I move on to the ink stage. I do the most of my inking with Sakura Micron Pens, sizes 005, 01 and 05. I start simply, by blocking in some of the black shadow shapes in the angel statue and on the assassin's forearm.

5 Spotting black shapes

I continue inking some of the black shapes, moving up to the collar section. Because these are small black shapes, I outline them with a 01 Micron and fill them with a Micron brush pen. To make sure I'm not smearing my pencil work, I have a piece of scrap paper that my inking hand rests on, whenever it's on part of the art.



6 *Textures to shade*

Now that my hand's getting warmed up with the pen work, I move into more of the line work and ink textures. I use different ink textures to shade and build the shadows. I ink Ezio's shoulder, keeping in mind that I want to give the fabric a rough and gritty feel.



7 Depicting the blade fist

Now I decide to tackle one of the more important elements in the drawing, which is Ezio's clenched fist and blade weapon. I ink the solid black first, then build the values with line work, paying close attention to line thickness, spacing and the light source.

ARTIST INSIGHT

WHITE IS RIGHT

Sometimes I use an opaque white ink with a brush to make small corrections, break up lines, or add splatters and stars. My ink of choice at the moment is Winsor & Newton's White Ink.



8 Details and values

I move on to finishing the angel statue. Keeping in mind the lighting and the fact that I want a full range of contrast, I use lines to create the shadows. My lines curve around the surface and toward the light source most of the time, to give the statue form. I also add numerous cracks and marks to give the statue a weathered surface.



9 Hand details

Next to the statue are the hands of a victim, which are dripping blood. I decide that the blood will look best as a solid black, and ink this first. I continue to render the hands with line work. This type of detail work, like the statue, is done with the smallest size Micron, 005.

10 Fog and wind texture

I decide to have the assassin's body fade into a fog-like effect. This both adds a creepy atmosphere and helps the foreground elements to pop out more. I do this with lines, close to horizontal, that start thick and become thinner as they go down to his feet. Some wavy lines imply the sense of wind. The idea is to have the black shadows fade to grey and white to the viewer's eye.



11 Dark shadow textures

There are some areas on the drawing that I want to add dark shadows to, without making them completely black. Underneath the statue, the shadow area could have been done with a black fill, although I decide to add a cross-hatching texture to give it a rougher look.



12 Dark and gritty face

Now for one of the most important parts: Ezio's face. Because this will require very tight and precise inking, I want my hand to be warmed up. I use a 005 Micron that's worn down a bit, which will help with small details. I want to give his face a very dark and rough look, so I add heavy stubble.



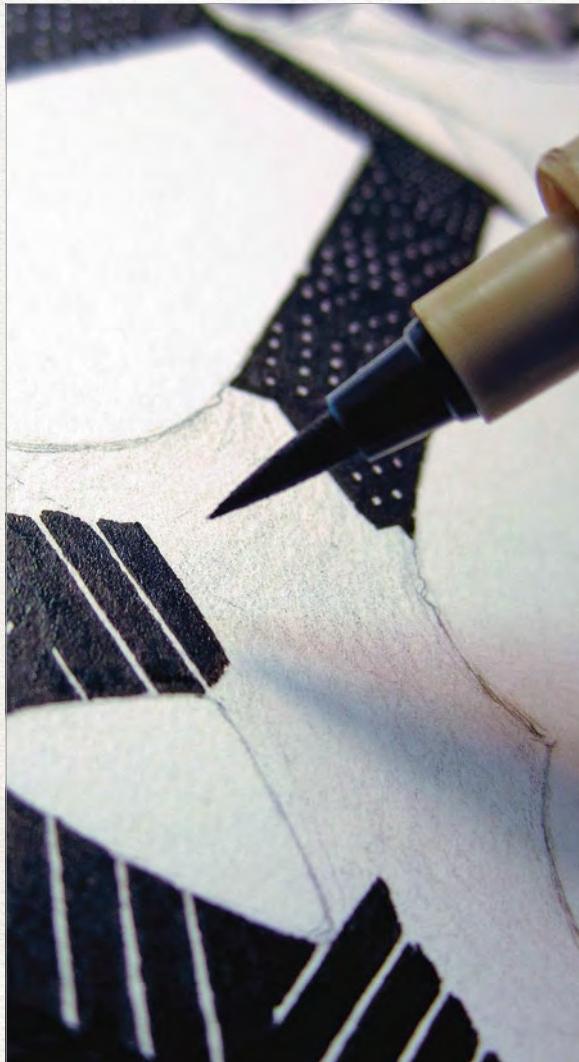
13 Tackling the background

The main figure and foreground parts are now done. But to make them pop out more I decide to heavily ink the gothic window background. As I did in the darker shadow under the statue, I decide to add a similar texture to the background wall that fades into the fog.

ARTIST INSIGHT

PEN PERFECT

Sakura Micron Brush pens are a good and quick way to make small ink fills. For big fills, such as a black background, I break out the brush and ink.



14 Background brush pen

I ink the wall texture behind Ezio with a fairly mechanical cross-hatching pattern. I want it to appear flat but with a rough surface. At the top I ink thicker lines with a brush pen, then switch back to a smaller Micron for inking near Ezio's elbows and below. I draw thinner lines that begin to break up, to fade the texture into the fog.

15 Finish and clean up pencilling

Once I finish up the background, I call the ink drawing complete. However, I let the drawing sit for a while, sometimes overnight, then use a Design ArtGum eraser to clean up some of the pencil marks. I use the cleaner eraser very carefully, pressing lightly, so the Micron pen ink doesn't fade. If my hands are bleeding, I try not to get stains on the drawing!

Studio setup

THE TOOLS OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

DAVID PALUMBO paints exclusively in oils, and in part two of his series he shares his ideal tools, materials and studio setup for creating traditional art

My philosophy for selecting tools is that they should usually be the best available, though in the end you can probably get the job done with just about anything. The surfaces I work on, the brands of paint I use, even the space in which I'm working, are all comfortable but not precious to me.

The one tool which I'm particular about is my set of brushes. These are consistent in brand, type and size, because the shape

and feel of the marks are things I want to have as much control over as possible.

That said, I do have general preferences I've arrived at over the years. I tend to like working on rigid surfaces primed with subtle textural randomness, because it makes the brush calligraphy more visible and interesting. My palette is always evolving. At present it features almost no earth colours, despite their popularity. I find prismatic more versatile, capable of being bold when used pure and subtle when checked against other prismatics.

MATERIALS

- Synthetic brushes
- Masonite panel
- Acrylic gesso
- Odourless Turpenoid
- Linseed Oil
- Glass Palette
- A-frame easel
- Palette knife

These tools are specifically arrived-at solutions to my own particular problems and habits. I always encourage artists learning traditional media to keep in mind that the tools which suit one artist may be completely wrong for another, so it's important to experiment and find your own favourites.



David is an award-winning illustrator and fine artist who works primarily in genre fiction and fantasy gaming.

www.dvpalumbo.com



1 Preferred surfaces

Choosing a surface to paint on means balancing the considerations of texture, cost and convenience. Illustration board is popular because of its smooth absorbent surface and ease of trimming. I like Masonite panels, although wood panels, linen, paper and even plexiglass all work as well. All surfaces should be primed or gessoed before applying oils.

GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

REFERENCE PRINT LARGE

I print my reference actual size and hang it next to my painting while I'm working.

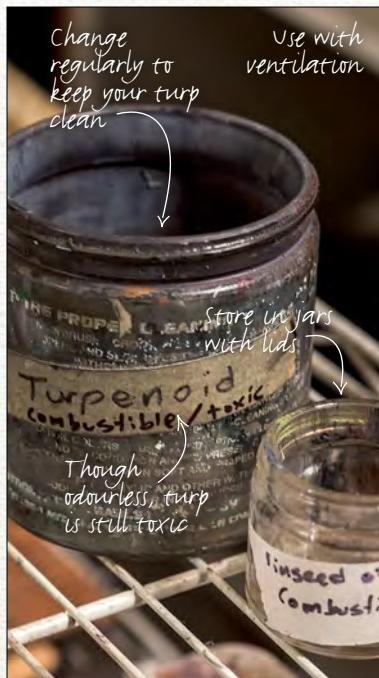


ARTIST INSIGHT

THINK ABOUT STORAGE
A major concern for traditional media work is storage. One reason I like Masonite panels is they are thin but strong and can stack into shelves when finished.

2 Preferred paints

Colour and feel vary between brands, but I typically use Titanium White, Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Orange, Scheveningen Yellow, Nickel Titanium Yellow, Cobalt Turquoise Light, Ultramarine Blue, Kings Blue Deep, Sap Green, Cinnabar Green, Phthalo Green and Lamp Black.



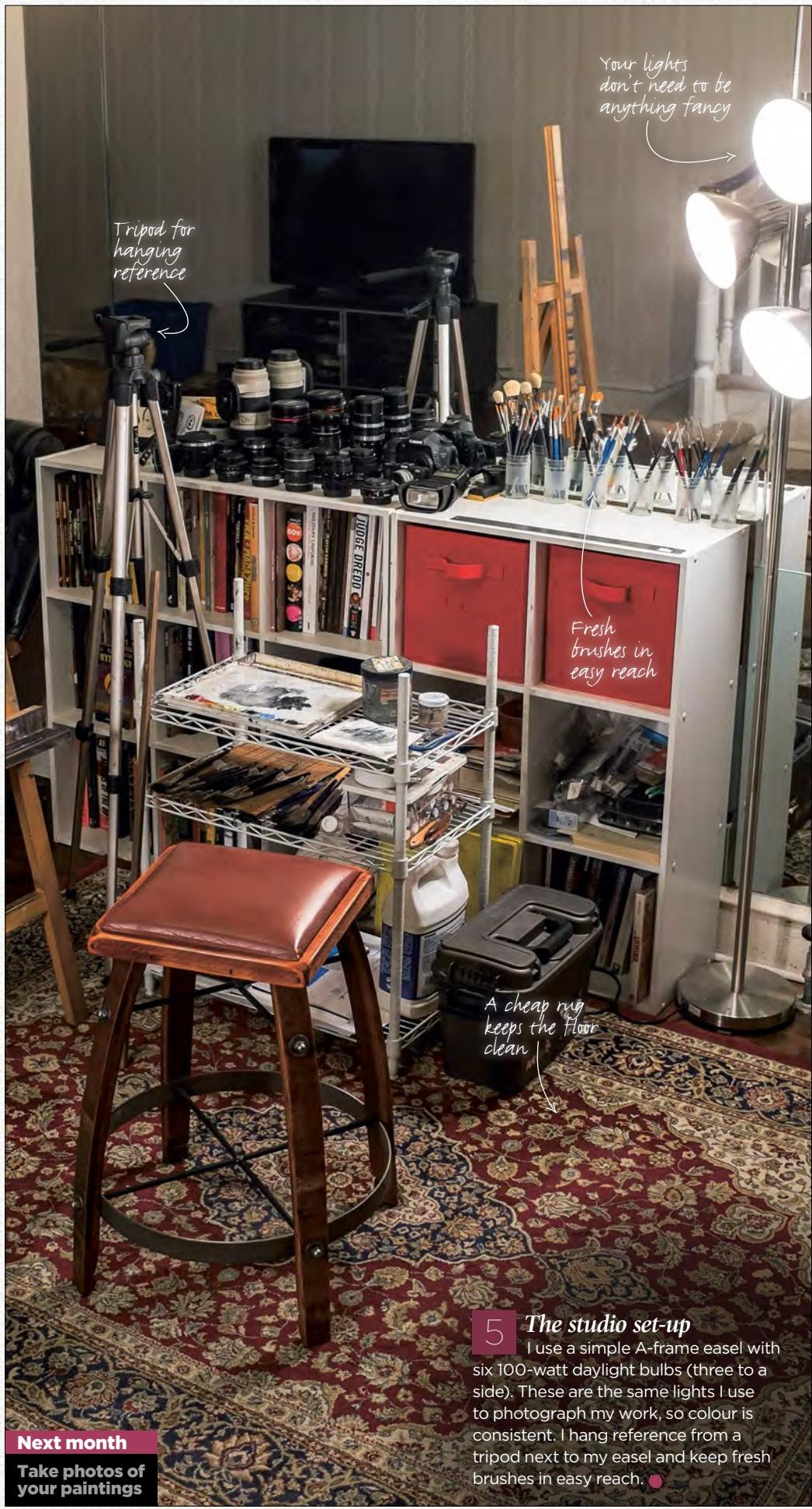
3 Solvent and medium

Odourless Turpenoid is my preferred solvent. For medium, I mix the Turpenoid with Linseed Oil at about a 50/50 ratio. I use my medium sparingly to loosen stiff paint. I also use it to "oil out" a dry painting's surface, applied thinly with a clean, lint-free rag.



4 Preferred brushes

My brushes are always Loew-Cornell Golden Taklon, a synthetic hair brush designed more for acrylic than oil, but they have great snap, keep their shape, and are relatively cheap. I exclusively use flats, except for a round #2 for detail and occasionally natural hair mops for smoothing.



5 The studio set-up

I use a simple A-frame easel with six 100-watt daylight bulbs (three to a side). These are the same lights I use to photograph my work, so colour is consistent. I hang reference from a tripod next to my easel and keep fresh brushes in easy reach.

First Impressions

Terese Nielsen

An upbringing in rural Nebraska meant Terese had plenty of time to hone her illustration skills



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up on a corn farm in Nebraska and had to find ways to keep myself entertained. This was before video games and computers, so I had few distractions and ample time to hone creative endeavours.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your work?

Raising children, needing money and being ADHD. Not only are kids a storehouse of evolving creativity, but to allow for more quality time with them – and make enough to feed them – I developed decorative and textural techniques that enable me to quickly resolve key areas of a painting.

You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything: where are you and what are you looking at? I'm riveted to the cover of The Fantastic Art of Boris Vallejo featuring the Primeval Princess. The image stirred within me things I didn't even know I loved yet: confident, powerful women, vibrant, rich colour, exquisitely rendered muscular bodies, otherworldly places.



TINKERBELL

Terese's fresh take on the Neverland faerie, for FASA's 1997 cyberpunk game Shadowrun.

“If you’re passionate, you’ll do what it takes. Jump, immerse yourself, develop...”

What was your next step in art?

I was fascinated with the inner workings of the mind, and the outer visage of the human form, and how far one could push and develop them. I pored over the pages of Arnold: The Education of a Bodybuilder for hours. When I failed miserably in chemistry, I turned to my long-standing hobby of drawing people.

Can you name one person who helped you on your way?

My older brother, Ron, was always available for brainstorming and supportive suggestions, and helped me develop the mindset to endure the competition at art school.

What was your first paid commission?

I've been making money with art ever since high school, when I was first commissioned to illustrate hand-made hair bows and accessories for a lady entrepreneur who lived down the road. I created her catalogues, pecking out a

bajillion pointillist dots with my Rapidograph pens. I learned the patience to employ a technique for many hours and learned to make a deadline (even when I was sick).

What's the last piece that you finished?

Heron, seventh in a seven-piece set of animal totem paintings for my Creatures of Spirit show in Seattle. I was literally creating it while we drove from Nevada to Seattle, and applying the final touches with gold leaf as the show was opening. The first piece was made for someone else who lived down the road, the last was done for me, on the road.

What are your illustration rituals?

Stall... stall some more, and then hurry. Ha. My three most consistent rituals are: 1) nestling into the library area of the studio to flip through books for inspiration; 2), my drawing phase requires complete silence or extremely contemplative music; and 3), when it's time for colour and rendering, I need interesting podcasts to keep my butt in the chair long enough to complete it.

What's the most important thing you've taught someone?

To believe in themselves enough to go for it. If you're passionate about making art, you'll do what it takes and put the time in. Risk, jump, immerse yourself and develop your passion.

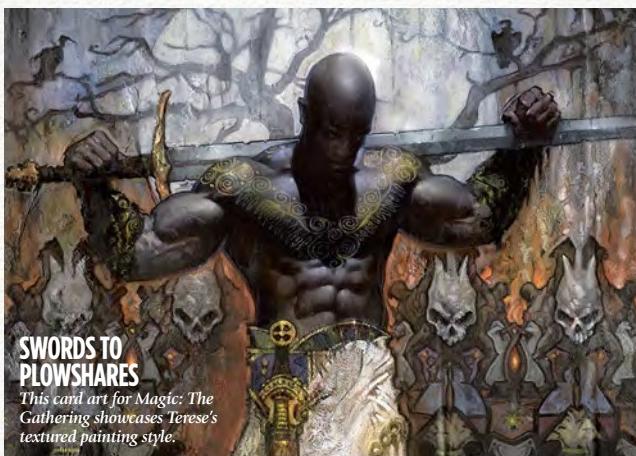
How has the industry of fantasy art changed for the better?

Wow! It's profoundly more visible nowadays. At my love-at-first-sight moment with Boris' Primeval Princess, the only place I'd see fantasy art was on book covers. Now it's in collectible card games, role-playing games, video games, computer games, in movies... just everywhere. And there are so many more venues for us as artists, collectors, educators and fans to come together.

What gripes do you have about the fantasy art industry right now?

None really. If you have gripes about it, then come up with your own idea and crowd-fund it! The only limit is one's own drive and creativity.

Terese is best known for her rich card art for Magic: The Gathering. You can see more of her work at www.tnielsen.com.



SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

This card art for Magic: The Gathering showcases Terese's textured painting style.

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†World Forest Resources, 1953 and UN FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010

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